SPECIAL FORCES BERLIN THE MEN READY FOR WORLD WAR III

HISTORY of WAR

SHERMAN FIREFLY

INSIDE THE ARMOURED HEART OF THE ALLIED ATTACK

35 YEARS ON...

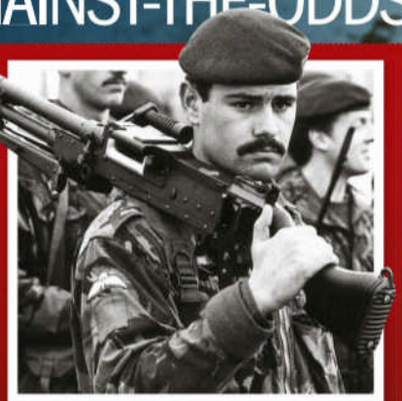
FALKLANDS OUR WAR

VETERANS SHARE THEIR MEMORIES OF BRITAIN'S AGAINST-THE-ODDS VICTORY

21ST LANCERS

THE TRAGIC CHARGE AT OMDURMAN

- **PHILIP NEAME** REMEMBERS WIRELESS RIDGE
- **ROBIN HORSFALL** ON HIS SAS 'SUICIDE MISSION'
- **JULIAN THOMPSON** RECALLS LEADING 3 COMMANDO
- **SIMON WESTON** ON POST-COMBAT RECOVERY



SUBMACHINE GUNS

FROM TRENCH-RAIDING ORIGINS TO MODERN MISSIONS

CLASH OF THE IRONCLADS

AMERICA'S FLOATING CIVIL WAR FORTRESSES GO HEAD-TO-HEAD

SECOND BATTLE OF ARTOIS

EXPLORE THE DOOMED 1915 ASSAULT ON VIMY RIDGE

FIGHTING PERU'S RED INSURGENCY

UNCOVER THE MURDER & MAYHEM OF SHINING PATH

Future
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KING & COUNTRY'S

GURKHAS

FOR OVER 200 YEARS *The Gurkhas*, the fighting men from the hills of Nepal, have been loyal and brave soldiers of the British Army.

Recruited first by the British *East India Company* in 1815 they were incorporated into the Indian Army in 1857 after *The Great Mutiny*. By the outbreak of WW2 in 1939, ***10*** regiments had been raised, each of 2 x battalions. Following the Dunkirk evacuation in June 1940, an additional ***15*** x battalions had been formed and by the end of World War Two a total of ***43*** were in action.

After India's independence in 1947 the original 10 Gurkha Regiments were divided between India and Great Britain with the former retaining 6 Regiments and the latter 4.

Malaya 1941 / 42

During the Japanese attack on Malaya in 1941 and into 1942, several battalions of Gurkhas fought stubbornly and bravely in the ill-fated campaign ... and suffered accordingly.

King & Country's newest *battlefield* figures show a Gurkha patrol taking on the Japanese for control of a small Malay hamlet... ***6 x individual fighting Gurkhas*** are available as is one ***2-man set*** showing a *Gurkha rifleman* using his famous ***"Kukri"*** knife to almost decapitate one of the attacking Japanese soldiers!

Together these figures tell an action – packed story and are worthy additions to *King & Country's* recently-released series on the Second World War in South East Asia.

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Welcome

"You have to assume that the enemy will be as nasty and as crafty as anyone. In war, there is no room for complacency"

– Major General Julian Thompson, CB, OBE

In April 1982, a small group of islands in the South Atlantic became the focus of a brief but bitter war between the UK and Argentina. It was a conflict that would immeasurably change both nations, and leave an indelible impression on those who served on both sides.

35 years later, **History of War** has spoken with four veterans of the conflict, each of whom has shared their unique experience of the conflict and their reflections on its impact across the years.

From Julian Thompson's logistical challenges leading 3 Commando at San Carlos and beyond, to Simon Weston's heroic post-combat recovery, these veterans' stories provide vivid accounts of comradeship, survival, and the enduring human spirit.

Tim Williamson
Editor

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timothy.williamson@futurenet.com

CONTRIBUTORS

TOM GARNER
As well as speaking with all four of our Falkland veterans this month, Tom was also lucky enough to get a behind-the-scenes preview of the newly reopened National Army Museum, nestled in the heart of London (page 50).

JONATHAN KRAUSE
While many students of WWI will be familiar with the Battle of Vimy Ridge, and in particular the significant Canadian participation in the victory, the French assault on this perilous position two years earlier is far less well known (page 42).

JAMES STEJSKAL
A former US Special Forces soldier, now historian and combat archaeologist, James begins his first of a two-part series lifting the lid on the secretive Special Forces operations at the hottest location in the Cold War: Berlin (page 56).

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HMS Invincible returns to the UK after operations in the Falklands

THE FALKLANDS OUR WAR

28 A small war with huge consequences, four British veterans recall their experiences of the fight for the islands

Frontline

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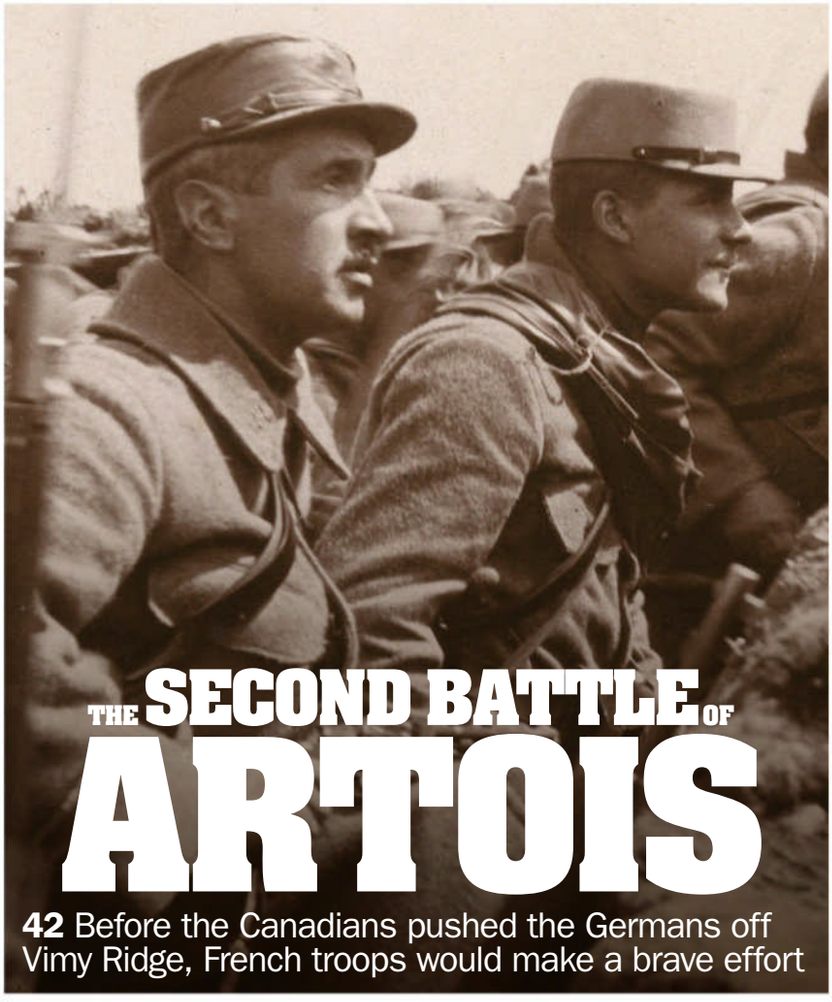
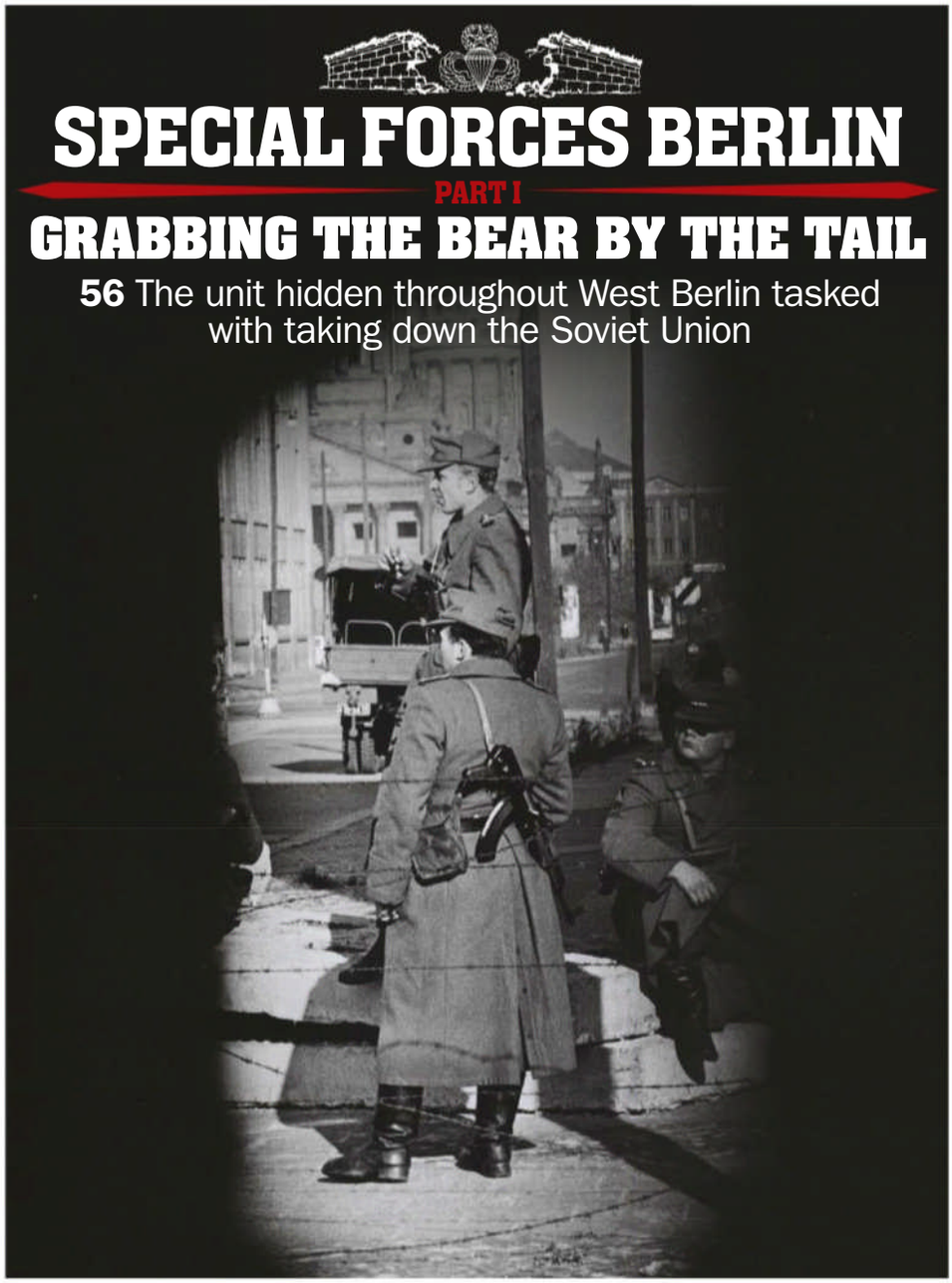


THE SECOND BATTLE OF ARTOIS

42 Before the Canadians pushed the Germans off Vimy Ridge, French troops would make a brave effort

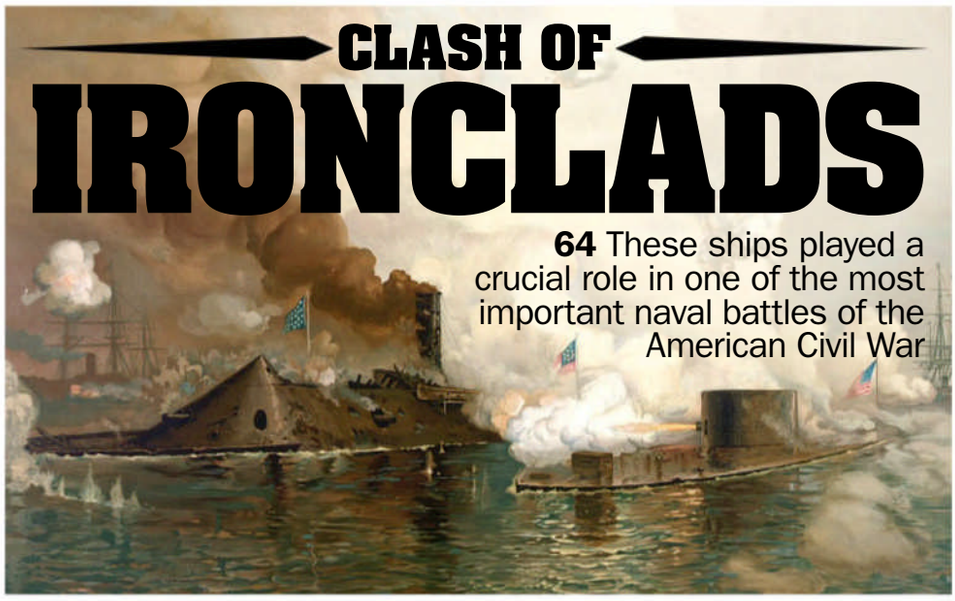


SPECIAL FORCES BERLIN

PART I

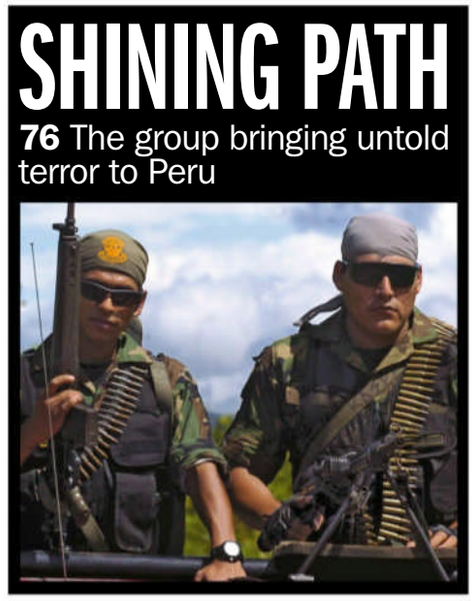
GRABBING THE BEAR BY THE TAIL

56 The unit hidden throughout West Berlin tasked with taking down the Soviet Union



CLASH OF IRONCLADS

64 These ships played a crucial role in one of the most important naval battles of the American Civil War



SHINING PATH

76 The group bringing untold terror to Peru


311

WAR in FOCUS

AIRBORNE ASSAULT

Taken: ***c.1987***

Soldiers of the Sandinista Popular Army (Ejercito Popular Sandinista, or EPS), prepare to board a Soviet-built Mi-17, for operations against rebel militia forces called the Contras. Raging between 1979-89, the Contra War saw right-wing rebels, primarily backed by the USA, in constant clashes with government forces of the left-wing Sandinista National Liberation Front.

WAR in FOCUS

DEFENDING WESTMINSTER

Taken: ***c. 1939-45***

Soldiers man an anti-aircraft gun positioned on Westminster Bridge, where St Stephen's Tower is visible in the background. The Palace of Westminster itself was bombed on 14 separate occasions between 1940-41, causing immense damage. The Commons Chamber was completely destroyed by incendiary bombs during night raids in May 1941.

WAR in FOCUS

TREADING WATER

Taken: ***27 August 2016***

The remains of a Sherman M4 sit stuck in the shallow waters off a Saipan beach in the Mariana Islands, where it has sat for more than 75 years. Captured by the Japanese in December 1941, during the same offensive as the attack on Pearl Harbor, the islands were retaken by American forces in 1944.

WAR in FOCUS

LAST LINE OF DEFENCE

Taken: ***c. September 1944***

Hitler Youth members take aim with target pistols to test and hone their marksmanship. In October 1944, Adolf Hitler released the Deutscher Volkssturm directive, creating a new militia of conscripted men and boys aged 16-60 capable of bearing arms. During the final Battle for Berlin, thousands of poorly equipped and trained Volkssturm were killed.

TIMELINE OF THE...

SUBMACHINE GUN

The SMG has a long, storied history dating back more than 100 years to its birth during the Great War

STEN

The Sten was the perfect weapon for the desperate situation Britain found itself in during WWII. Fast and cheap to make, more than 4 million were produced by the end of the war.

1915 — 1918 — 1938 — 1941

VILLAR-PEROSA

Initially designed by Abiel Revelli as an ultra-light machine gun for the Italian air force. Its light weight and firepower saw it issued as an infantry weapon to elite Bersaglieri and Arditi units.

Left: *Made up of two guns combined, the Villar-Perosa was among the first submachine guns to be used in combat*

MP18

The MP18 has the distinction of being the first mass-produced and mass-issued submachine gun. Its design set the template for the many submachine guns that followed. It was used by German storm troopers during the last months of the Great War.

Right: *The MP18 designed by Hugo Schmeisser used a simple action and a horizontal magazine*

THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN

Although developed as a 'trench broom' to clear German positions, the Thompson came too late to see action during WWI. It gained its iconic status in the hands of American gangsters and the Allies during WWII.

The Thompson could fire 700 rounds per minute

Canadian workers pose with the Sten guns they helped assemble in a small-arms factory near Toronto, 1943

"THE STEN WAS THE PERFECT WEAPON FOR THE DESPERATE SITUATION BRITAIN FOUND ITSELF IN"

UZI

Famous for its use by the Israeli Defence Forces during the Six-Day War and later conflicts, the Uzi has been adopted by over 50 countries. Its compact size is due to an innovative telescoping bolt.

***Left:** The Uzi was one of the first weapons to have its magazine housed in a pistol grip, greatly improving its balance*

***Below:** The MP5 uses a roller-delayed blowback action and fires from a closed action, making it more accurate than many submachine guns*

HECKLER & KOCH MP5

For decades, the MP5 has been the benchmark for all other submachine guns: superbly designed, extremely controllable and adaptable. It remains the go-to weapon for many police, counter-terrorism and elite units worldwide.

1950 — 1954 — 1966 — 1991

***Above:** The M50's ingenious design had a hinged receiver that enabled the gun to open like a book*

MADSEN M50

Designed for the Danish military, the M50 was one of a new breed of cheap but effective post-war submachine guns. It was widely used and even saw action during the Vietnam War.

"THE M50 WAS ONE OF A NEW BREED OF CHEAP BUT EFFECTIVE POST-WAR SUBMACHINE GUNS"

FN P90

The Belgian FN P90 is a revolutionary design, which combines firepower and compactness. Favoured by Special Forces, the P90 fires a small but potent 5.7x28mm round capable of penetrating some body armour.

The FN P90's innovative horizontal, high-capacity magazine has a spiral feedway that turns the bullet before it enters the weapon's action

Images: Getty

SMGs OF THE WORLD

As a key infantry weapon, dozens of nations around the world have developed their own variants of the submachine gun

Left: The Thompson submachine gun was expensive to produce, so the US developed the crude but effective M3

M3 SUBMACHINE GUN
CALIBRE: .45 ACP
IN SERVICE: 1943 - 1992 UNITED STATES

MP5
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1964-PRESENT GERMANY

ERMA EMP
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1932-1945 GERMANY

CARL GUSTAV M/45
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1945-PRESENT SWEDEN

MADSEN M50
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1950-1980 DENMARK

LANCHESTER SUBMACHINE GUN
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1941-1960 UK

STERLING L2A3
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1953-1993 UK

HOTCHKISS UNIVERSAL
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1949-70 FRANCE

MAS-38
CALIBRE: 7.65X20MM
IN SERVICE: 1938-1955 FRANCE

FAMAE SAF
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1993-PRESENT CHILE

BERETTA PM12
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1959 - PRESENT ITALY

BXP
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1988-PRESENT SOUTH AFRICA

Below: A commando armed with a Thompson submachine gun peers around a corner during Operation Archery, a raid on Norway in 1941

Troops land on Omaha Beach in June 1944

1 BRITISH COMMANDO RAIDS

1940-1945 EUROPE

During their daring raids on Nazi-occupied Europe, British commandos favoured the American Thompson submachine gun for its firepower at close range.

2 THE BATTLE OF STALINGRAD

1942-1943 STALINGRAD, RUSSIA

One in four Soviet troops were armed with a submachine gun during the battle. The Soviet tactic of overwhelming firepower was devastating. The submachine gun was ideal for the street battles of Stalingrad.

3 D-DAY

6 JUNE 1944 NORMANDY, FRANCE

During the D-Day landings, three of World War II's most iconic submachine guns were deployed; the Thompson M1, the Sten gun and the MP40.

4 SUEZ CRISIS

6 NOVEMBER 1956 PORT SAID, EGYPT

650 men of 45 Commando launched history's first helicopter air assault on Port Said. Many of the commandos were armed with the venerable MkV Sten, alongside the brand new Sterling submachine gun.

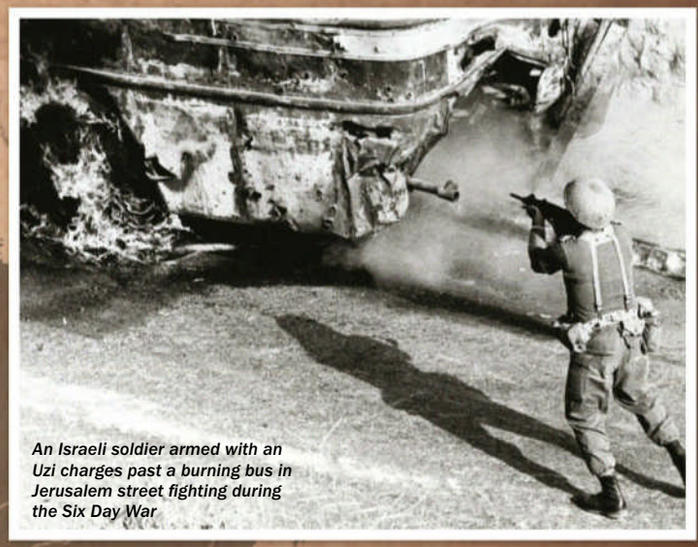
PPS-43
CALIBRE: 7.62X25MM
IN SERVICE: 1942-1960 SOVIET UNION

Above: Lauri Törni, an army captain, fought under three different flags: Finland, Germany and the United States

5 BATTLE OF JERUSALEM

6 JUNE 1967 JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

Israeli Paratroopers found their Uzis to be extremely useful during the street fighting in Jerusalem against Arab forces during the Six Day War.



An Israeli soldier armed with an Uzi charges past a burning bus in Jerusalem street fighting during the Six Day War

2

TYPE 05
CALIBRE: 5.8X21MM
IN SERVICE: 2005-PRESENT CHINA

MSMC
CALIBRE: 5.6X30MM
IN SERVICE: 2006-PRESENT INDIA

5

4

6

UZI
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1949-PRESENT ISRAEL

6 LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS

1967-1970 VIETNAM

During the Vietnam War, American Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols penetrated deep into North Vietnamese territory using suppressed submachine guns in bloody close range ambushes and prisoner snatches.

7 IRANIAN EMBASSY SIEGE

5 MAY 1980 LONDON, UK

The British SAS launched a daring day-time operation to rescue hostages held by members of an Iranian separatist group. The dramatic SAS operation helped cement the MP5 as the premier submachine gun for special forces.

Members of the British SAS, armed with MP5s, prepare to breech a window during the 1980 Iranian Embassy Siege

OWEN GUN
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
IN SERVICE: 1942-1970 AUSTRALIA

***Left:** French police seal off the Bataclan Theatre following an attack in which 89 were killed*

8 2015 PARIS TERRORIST ATTACK

13 NOVEMBER 2015 PARIS, FRANCE

French police, alongside the French Army, responded to the devastating attack on civilians. Police and counter-terrorism units were often armed with Beretta PM12 submachine guns.

Images: Alamy

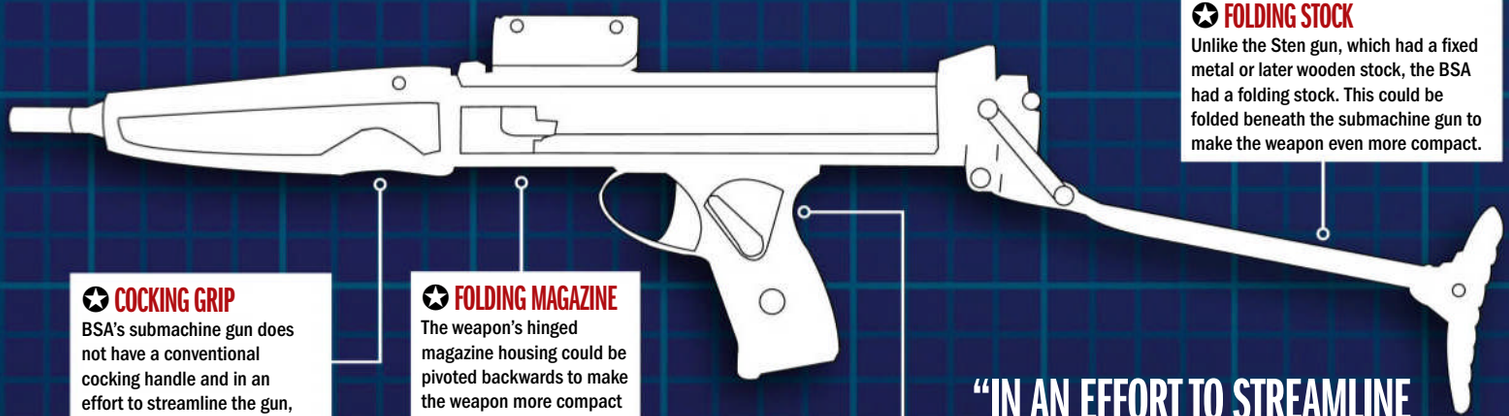
EXPERIMENTAL GUNS

Throughout their century-long history, SMGs have continued to evolve in fits and starts of development. Here are some of the most interesting and bizarre weapons that didn't quite make it

Weapons have evolved along with the nature of warfare, and submachine guns are no different. Initially developed to help break the stalemate of the Western Front with sheer firepower, they have gradually developed into the personal defence weapons of today. Still able to deliver devastating close-range firepower but in a more refined, more compact, lighter and reliable form.

BSA EXPERIMENTAL MACHINE CARBINE

Following the end of World War II, the British Army began the search for a replacement for the Sten Gun, which had been the British military's workhorse submachine gun since 1941. A number of companies including Sterling, Madsen and the Birmingham Small Arms company (BSA) submitted designs.



FOLDING STOCK

Unlike the Sten gun, which had a fixed metal or later wooden stock, the BSA had a folding stock. This could be folded beneath the submachine gun to make the weapon even more compact.

COCKING GRIP

BSA's submachine gun does not have a conventional cocking handle and in an effort to streamline the gun, BSA developed an ingenious system where the foregrip could be pumped forwards and backwards to cock the weapon.

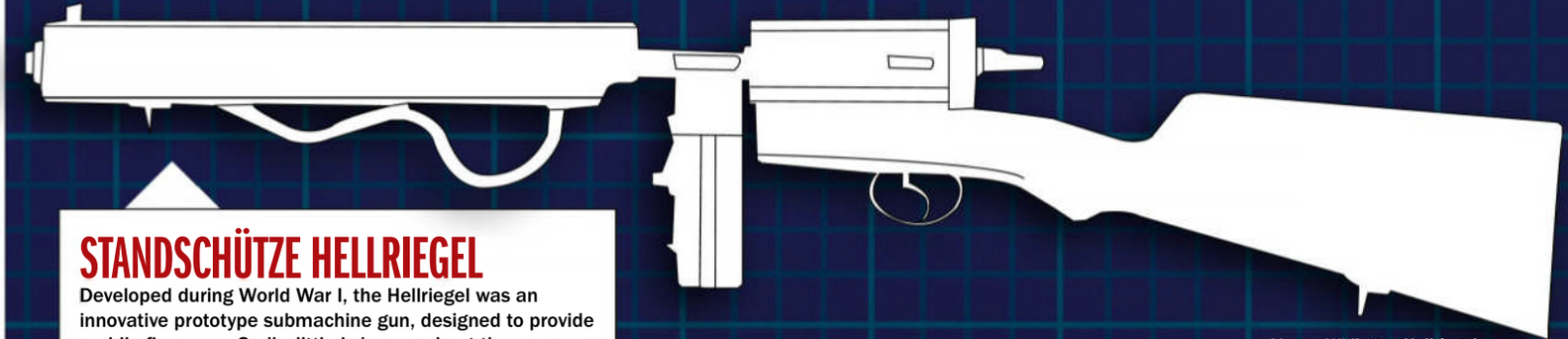
FOLDING MAGAZINE

The weapon's hinged magazine housing could be pivoted backwards to make the weapon more compact and also allow jams to be cleared without having to remove the magazine.

THUMB SAFETY

The BSA had a thumb safety and selector switch built into the pistol grip, which was a massive improvement on the rudimentary Sten gun's safety slot. This made the weapon safer and more ergonomic to use.

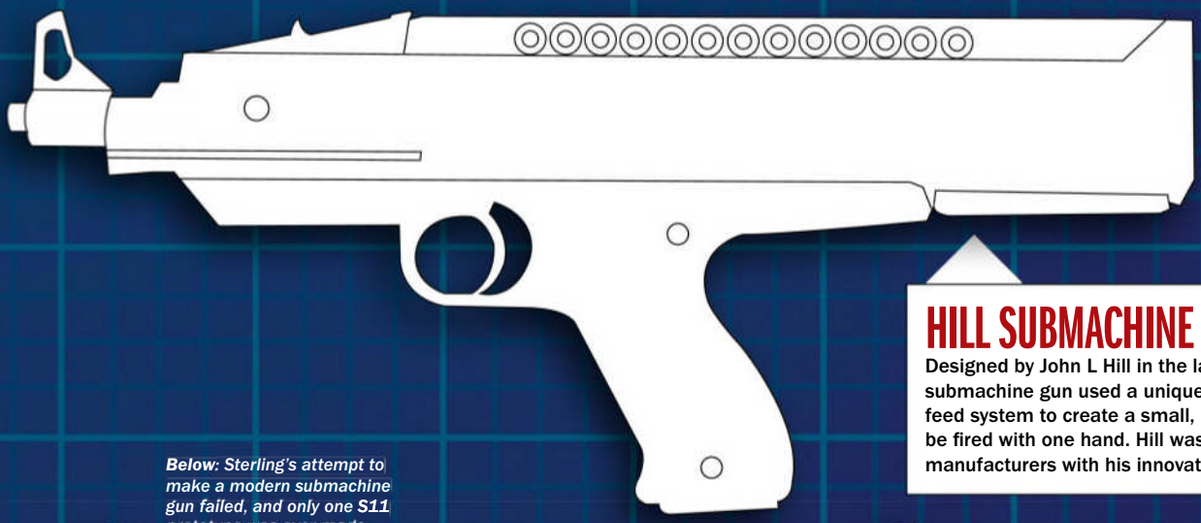
"IN AN EFFORT TO STREAMLINE THE GUN, BSA DEVELOPED AN INGENIOUS SYSTEM WHERE THE FOREGRIP COULD BE PUMPED FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS TO COCK THE WEAPON"



STANDSCHÜTZE HELLRIEGEL

Developed during World War I, the Hellriegel was an innovative prototype submachine gun, designed to provide mobile firepower. Sadly, little is known about the weapon and it did not enter production. Unusually, it had a water-cooled barrel jacket like a machine gun and could feed from a large drum or smaller stick magazines.

Above: While the Hellriegel was one of the earliest submachine guns, it does not seem to have progressed beyond the prototype stage



Left: Smaller than an Uzi, the compact Hill submachine gun went on to inspire the FN P90 many years later

HILL SUBMACHINE GUN

Designed by John L Hill in the late 1940s, the Hill submachine gun used a unique horizontal magazine and feed system to create a small, light weapon that could be fired with one hand. Hill was unable to interest major manufacturers with his innovative design.

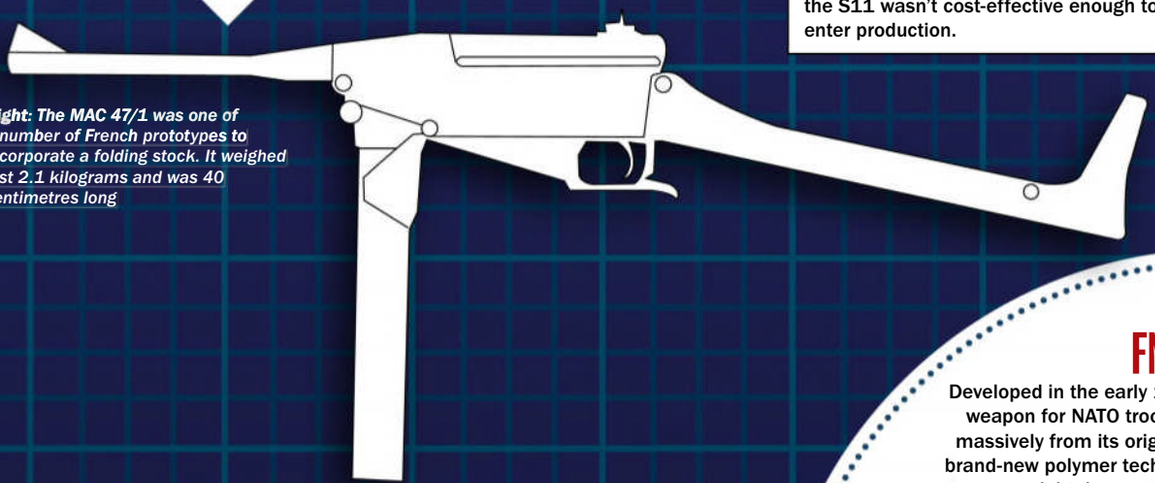
Below: Sterling's attempt to make a modern submachine gun failed, and only one S11 prototype was ever made

PM MAC 47/1

The MAC 47/1 was a response to the French army's request for an extremely compact submachine gun with a folding stock and magazine housing. Designed by the government arsenal at Chatellerault, the MAC 47/1 was unpleasant to shoot due to its poor ergonomics. The MAT 49 was adopted instead.

STERLING S11

With the rise of the Uzi and the new MP5, the British Sterling Armaments company needed a new submachine gun. Taking inspiration from the Uzi, the S11 had a stamped metal box-shaped receiver. Plastic grips, a grip safety and a new kind of folding stock were introduced. As Sterling's market share declined, it was decided that the S11 wasn't cost-effective enough to enter production.

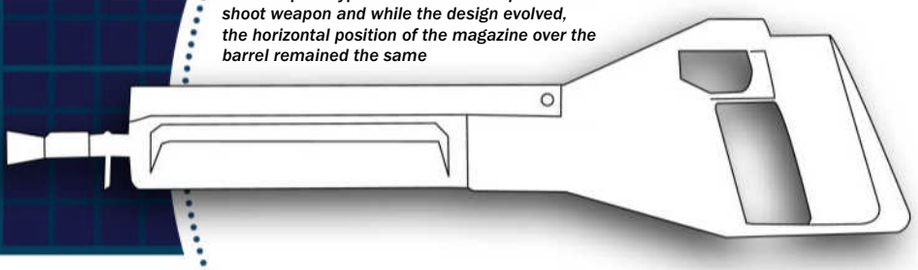


Right: The MAC 47/1 was one of a number of French prototypes to incorporate a folding stock. It weighed just 2.1 kilograms and was 40 centimetres long

FN P90 PROTOTYPE

Developed in the early 1980s as a personal defence weapon for NATO troops, the P90's design evolved massively from its original unusual design. FN used brand-new polymer technology to keep the weapon's weight down and developed a new horizontal magazine inspired by the earlier Hill submachine gun.

The first prototype of the P90 was a point-and-shoot weapon and while the design evolved, the horizontal position of the magazine over the barrel remained the same



"FN USED BRAND NEW POLYMER TECHNOLOGY TO KEEP THE WEAPON'S WEIGHT DOWN AND DEVELOPED A NEW HORIZONTAL MAGAZINE INSPIRED BY THE EARLIER HILL SUBMACHINE GUN"

HEAD TO HEAD

he MP40, a masterpiece of German engineering, met its match on the Eastern Front: the mass-produced Soviet PPSh-41

"IDEAL FOR CLOSE QUARTER URBAN FIGHTING, IT WAS THE PERFECT WEAPON FOR THE HOUSE-TO-HOUSE FIGHTING OF BATTLES LIKE STALINGRAD"

PPSH-41

ORIGIN: ***SOVIET RUSSIA*** ***YEARS IN OPERATION:*** ***1941-1955***

STRUCTURE

Unlike the MP40, the PPSh-41 had a simple, cheap one piece wooden stock and a perforated stamped metal barrel shroud, which allowed the barrel to cool down quickly.

STOCK

The wooden stock was easy to manufacture and helped conserve Russia's metal supply. However, it also made the weapon longer and heavier, the later PPS-43 introduced a folding metal stock.

MAGAZINE

The PPSh could feed from a 35-round box magazine or a 71-round drum magazine. While the drum was heavy and had some reliability problems it offered superb firepower.

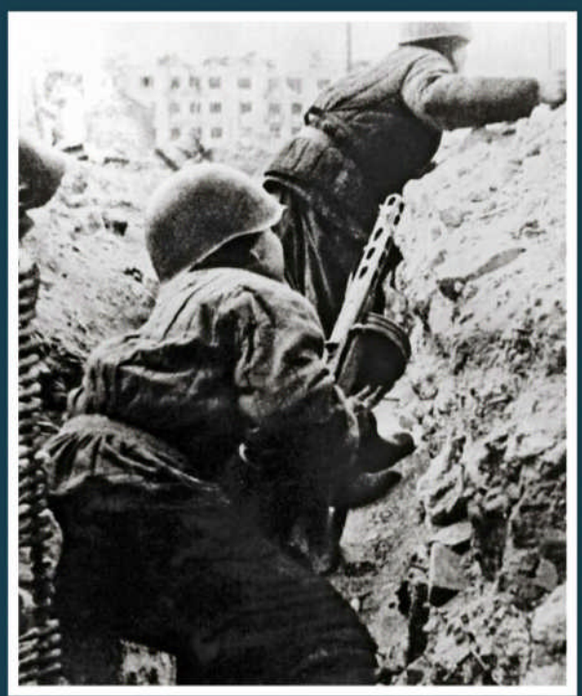
PRODUCTION

The PPSh-41's design relied on a stamped receiver and parts that allowed the weapon to be produced both in huge quantities in large factories and if needed in smaller workshops.

TOTAL

SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE

The PPSh-41 was capable of firing more than 900 rounds per minute. Soviet troops used its firepower to suppress and overwhelm German troops. Ideal for close quarter urban fighting, it was the perfect weapon for the house-to-house fighting of battles like Stalingrad and Berlin. The PPSh-41 could be made in less than seven hours, and the submachine gun's stamped parts and simple wooden stock allowed Soviet factories to produce 3,000 guns per day. By the end of the war, some 6 million PPSh-41s had been made.



Right: *A Soviet soldier with a PPSh-41 and 71-round drum magazine prepares to advance at Stalingrad*

QUANTITY OVER QUALITY

The MP40 was without a doubt the better made of the two rival submachine guns. Its modern design and finely machined parts made it a robust, reliable weapon. However, the design was also its downfall as it required complex machining operations, which slowed production significantly. By 1945, Germany had produced more than 1 million MP40s, compared to 4 million Stens and 6 million PPSh-41s. Germany could not match the Allies' simple, mass produced designs in terms of quantity. On the battlefield this often left German troops overwhelmed by the superior enemy firepower.

***Right:** A German assault pioneer with an MP40 dives for cover while attacking a bunker*

MP40

***ORIGIN:** NAZI GERMANY **YEARS IN OPERATION:** 1940-45*

STRUCTURE

In 1938, the Germans specially developed a bakelite (plastic) foregrip assembly. As the MP40s barrel is unshrouded, this offered somewhere to grip the weapon, as well as keep the MP40's weight down.

MAGAZINE

The MP40 had a 32-round stick magazine, using a double column of cartridges it tapered to feed a single round. This system caused some issues with jamming.

STOCK

Ideal for mechanised infantry and paratroops, the MP40 was a compact weapon at just 63cm long with its stock folded. The weapon could also be fired with the stock collapsed.

PRODUCTION

Unlike the Soviet PPSh-41, the MP40 was machined from forged steel, which was much more expensive and time consuming than the PPSh-41 simple stamped receiver.

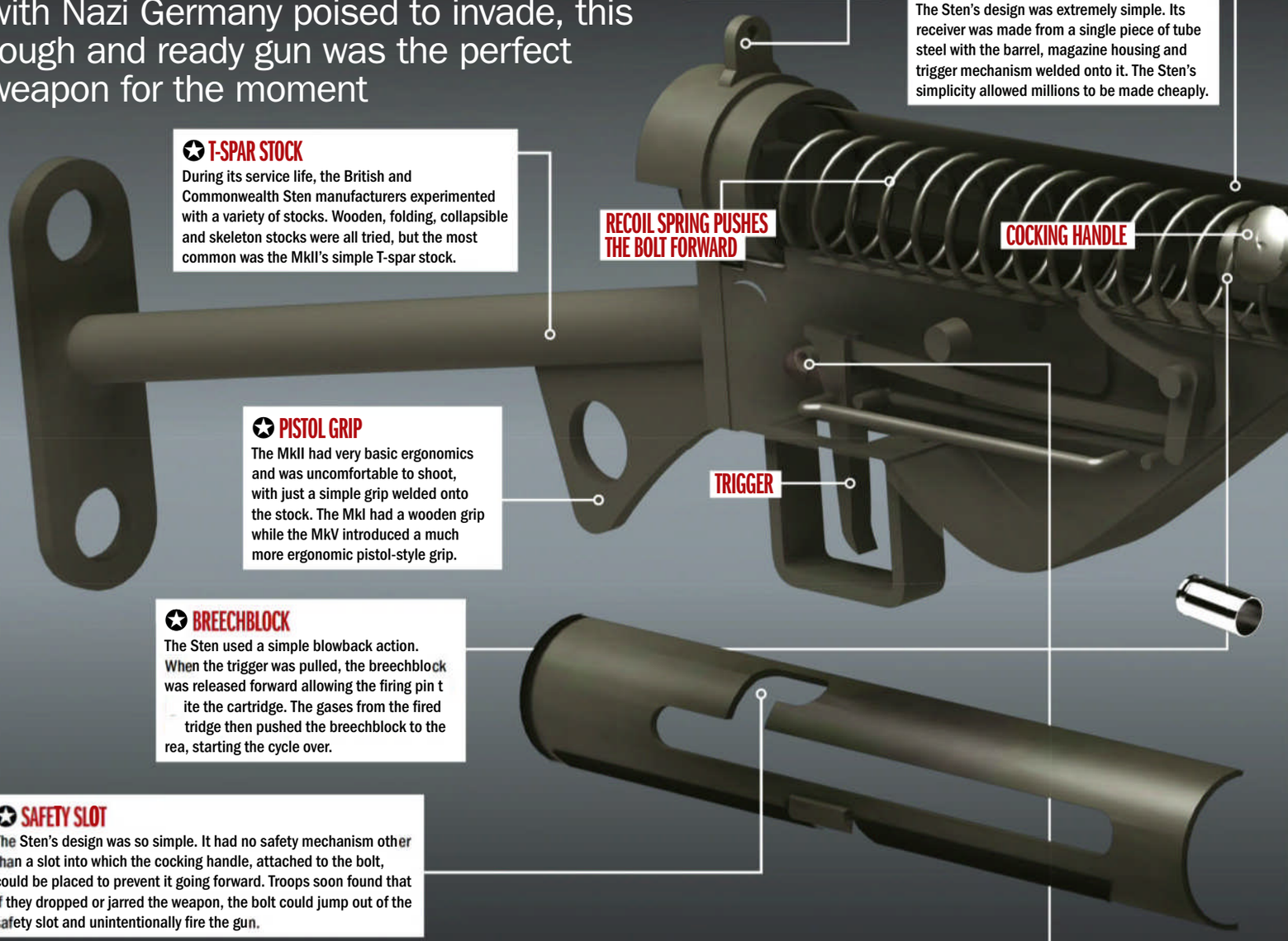
TOTAL

"THE MP40 WAS A COMPACT WEAPON AT JUST 63CM LONG WITH ITS STOCK FOLDED. THE WEAPON COULD ALSO BE FIRED WITH THE STOCK COLLAPSED"

Illustrations: Jean-Michel Girard / The Art Agency Images: Alamy

ANATOMY OF A STEN

Developed during Britain's darkest hour, with Nazi Germany poised to invade, this rough and ready gun was the perfect weapon for the moment



A SIMPLE REAR PEEP SIGHT

TUBE RECEIVER
The Sten's design was extremely simple. Its receiver was made from a single piece of tube steel with the barrel, magazine housing and trigger mechanism welded onto it. The Sten's simplicity allowed millions to be made cheaply.

T-SPAR STOCK
During its service life, the British and Commonwealth Sten manufacturers experimented with a variety of stocks. Wooden, folding, collapsible and skeleton stocks were all tried, but the most common was the MkII's simple T-spar stock.

RECOIL SPRING PUSHES THE BOLT FORWARD

COCKING HANDLE

PISTOL GRIP
The MkII had very basic ergonomics and was uncomfortable to shoot, with just a simple grip welded onto the stock. The MkI had a wooden grip while the MkV introduced a much more ergonomic pistol-style grip.

TRIGGER

BREECHBLOCK
The Sten used a simple blowback action. When the trigger was pulled, the breechblock was released forward allowing the firing pin t ite the cartridge. The gases from the fired tridge then pushed the breechblock to the rea, starting the cycle over.

SAFETY SLOT
The Sten's design was so simple. It had no safety mechanism other than a slot into which the cocking handle, attached to the bolt, could be placed to prevent it going forward. Troops soon found that if they dropped or jarred the weapon, the bolt could jump out of the safety slot and unintentionally fire the gun.

SPECIFICATIONS

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: UK
SERVICE DATES: 1941-1956
CALIBRE: 9X19MM
LENGTH: 76.2CM
WEIGHT: 3KG
MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 32-ROUNDS
RATE OF FIRE: 550 ROUNDS PER MINUTE

"THE STEN'S MAGAZINE WAS LOADED INTO THE WEAPON FROM THE SIDE. THIS HAD THE BENEFIT OF ENABLING SOLDIERS TO GET LOW, CLOSE TO THE GROUND AND STILL BE ABLE TO USE THE WEAPON"

FIRE SELECTOR
The Sten could be fired in semi-auto or full-auto. The shooter could select which mode using the weapon's crossbolt selector button. For full-auto, the crossbolt was pushed through so that it protruded to the left. For semi-auto it protruded to the right.

FRONT SIGHT
The MkII's sights were extremely rudimentary. The rear sight was a simple peep while the front sight was a piece of folded and welded triangular metal. These were later improved with proper sights added to the more refined MkV.

PUSH BUTTON MAGAZINE RELEASE

SPENT CASES EXIT FROM THE EJECTION PORT

MAGAZINE HOUSING
Unlike the German MP40 or American Thompson, the Sten's magazine was loaded into the weapon from the side. This had the benefit of enabling soldiers to get low, close to the ground and still be able to use their weapon.

BARREL
The MkI Sten initially had six rifling grooves inside its barrel, but with the simplification of the MkII, this was reduced to two. The Sten's barrel was 19.6 centimetres long, much shorter than the PPSh-41, Thompson and MP40.

BARREL SHROUD
The Sten has few creature comforts but the barrel shroud was needed to give troops somewhere to hold the weapon. Holding it too tightly by its magazine could prevent the gun from feeding reliably.

SMGS ON A BUDGET

The Sten was vital to Britain's war effort. With the rapid expansion of the country's small professional army in 1939-40, these forces needed every weapon they could get. The simple, cheap and robust Sten gun offered a weapon that could be **rapidly manufactured for as little as 15 shillings.**

The most basic version of the Sten had fewer than 50 parts and could be made in small factories and workshops with basic tools. While the Sten wasn't the most reliable or the best submachine gun of the war, more than 4 million were made, equipping British and Commonwealth troops and resistance fighters all over Europe. The Sten **played a small, important role in winning WWII.**

A British paratrooper poses with a new MkII Sten Gun in October 1942

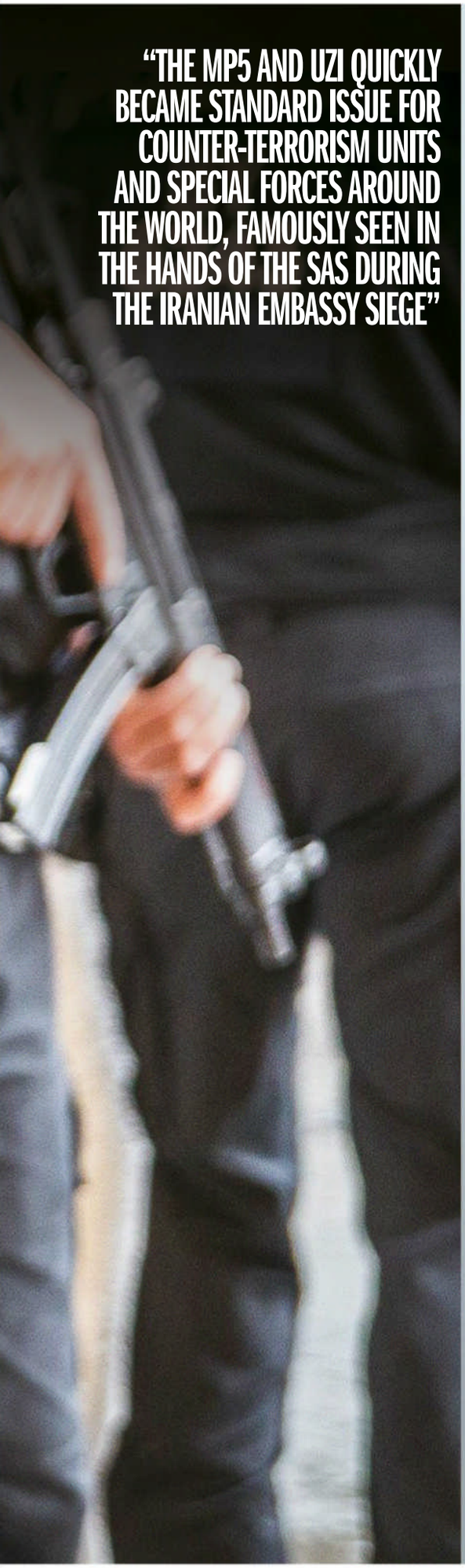
"OVER FOUR MILLION WERE MADE, EQUIPPING BRITISH AND COMMONWEALTH TROOPS AND RESISTANCE FIGHTERS ALL OVER EUROPE"

Illustration: Alex Pang

ARE SMGs STILL NEEDED?

Developed during WWI, the submachine gun reached its pinnacle during WWII, but the 21st century has seen the weapon increasingly relegated to niche law-enforcement and counter-terrorism roles

Perhaps the finest modern submachine gun for more than 40 years, the MP5 has been the weapon of choice for special forces and law enforcement



"THE MP5 AND UZI QUICKLY BECAME STANDARD ISSUE FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM UNITS AND SPECIAL FORCES AROUND THE WORLD, FAMOUSLY SEEN IN THE HANDS OF THE SAS DURING THE IRANIAN EMBASSY SIEGE"

As the Great War raged on, generals sought a weapon that would give troops an advantage during increasingly vicious trench battles. Shorter and handier than a rifle, with greater firepower than a pistol, the submachine gun proved to be the perfect option for the close-quarter trench fights that came to characterise the war. The German MP18 became the first widely issued submachine gun. Issued to elite storm troopers, it proved highly effective during Germany's last great offensive in 1918.

While the basic design of submachine guns had changed little, by the outbreak of WWII several nations had embraced them. Germany led the way in development with the outstanding MP38/MP40. During the war, the submachine gun kept evolving, as new cheap, simple and quick to manufacture weapons such as the Sten and PPSh-41, emerged and soon these could equip massive conscript armies.

World War II saw the submachine gun come into its own, but it also saw the birth of a new weapon system – the assault rifle. Again, the Germans led the way with the StG-44, but the Soviets were quick to recognise that combining the medium range accuracy of a rifle with the firepower of a submachine gun was the next step. The Cold War saw the emergence of the infamous AK-47 and the American M16, forcing the submachine gun into a more marginal role.

Despite the US and Soviet Union quickly adopting assault rifles, other Western nations were slower to move from full power battle rifles to the new shorter and handier weapons. As a result, submachine guns were crucial in equipping vehicle and tank crews, as well as arming support troops that simply didn't need such a large, heavy rifle.

The submachine gun continued to equip troops in many Western armies into the 1990s but as the NATO powers standardised to more compact assault rifles, such as the M4, the submachine gun was slowly retired. Yet despite this, the later half of the 20th century saw the ever adaptable submachine gun take on a new niche but important role. With a string of terrorist attacks during the 1970s and 80s, including the attack on the 1972 Munich Olympics and the 1980 Iranian Embassy Siege, the need for counter-terrorist forces grew. These special forces units needed a weapon that was light, compact, capable and offered the firepower they needed to gain superiority quickly at close range. The submachine gun proved to be the perfect weapon. Its pistol calibre ammunition also prevented over-penetration, minimising the risk of passing through targets or walls and hitting innocent people.

The MP5 and Uzi quickly became standard issue for counter-terrorism units and special forces around the world, famously seen in the hands of the SAS during the Iranian Embassy siege. The Heckler & Koch MP5 remains one of the finest submachine gun designs ever developed. Its design makes it more accurate than earlier models, essential when engaging targets when hostages may be involved. It was also one of the first modular submachine guns allowing users to use suppressors, as well as add lights, lasers and optics to customise their weapons for specific missions.

In recent years, more advanced designs have built on the MP5's characteristics, thereby improving the submachine gun's modularity by adding accessory rails and improving accuracy with new kinds of ammunition. The most prominent of this new generation are the ingenious FN P90, Heckler & Koch's extremely compact MP7 and the Chinese Type 05. Firing specialised ammunition, these newer guns are optimised to pierce body armour. The very fast, very small rounds also have less potential to cause collateral damage once they hit their target. While these guns have begun to equip special forces around the world, they were in fact developed for another, more niche role.

In the 1980s, it was felt that NATO's rear echelon troops were vulnerable to attack from heavily armed and armoured Soviet special forces. They needed a compact but powerful personal defence weapon (PDW). These new PDW's were built on the concept of a submachine gun but utilised spitzer (pointed) bullets, which are more accurate and able to penetrate body armour. This evolution of the submachine gun has seen it return to limited military service even after the Soviet Union fell.

Submachine guns have continued to remain relevant in both military and law-enforcement applications as their designs have continuously evolved and adapted to fill new roles. While no longer standard issue on the battlefield, they remain relevant today in niche roles with special forces and counter-terrorism units, as well as a compact personal defence weapon for support troops.

Heckler & Koch's attempt to better their MP5 was a small, compact PDW, designed around a small but potent cartridge

Images: Shutterstock

JOHN T THOMPSON

The inventor of history's most iconic SMG

YEARS: 31 DECEMBER 1860 – 21 JUNE 1940 **COUNTRY:** USA

Brigadier General John Taliaferro Thompson, the force behind the development of the Thompson submachine gun, graduated from West Point in 1882. Specialising in engineering, he later joined the US Army's Ordnance Department.

By the outbreak of the Spanish–American War in 1898, Thompson had risen to the rank of lieutenant colonel and was the chief ordnance officer for the campaign in Cuba. After the war, he became chief of the department's small arms division, where he was instrumental in selecting the .45 ACP cartridges, the same round his submachine gun would later fire.

When the stopping ability of the ammunition used by the army proved to be underpowered, Thompson, along with medical officer Major Louis Anatole LaGarde, began a series of tests to evaluate which ammunition should be used. Their trials included shooting human cadavers and live cattle to establish which ammunition had the strongest stopping power – the hard-hitting .45 ACP round won. Thompson also helped oversee the development of the army's new Springfield M1903 rifle and the adoption of the iconic Colt 1911 pistol.

Retiring from the US Army in November 1914, Thompson took a job as chief design engineer at Remington. At the same time, he began to think of ways to break the deadlock on the Western Front, believing mobile firepower was the key.

He began working on automatic weapons in 1916 but it wasn't until 1918 that his company, the Auto-Ordnance Corporation, had its first prototypes ready. With the help of Theodore Eickhoff and Oscar Payne, Auto-Ordnance continued development of Thompson's idea for a small machine gun "that will fire 50 to 100 rounds, so light that [a soldier] can drag it with him as he crawls on his belly from trench to trench, and wipe out a whole company single-handed. A trench broom."

"WHILE THE GUNS WERE OFTEN ALSO CARRIED BY LAW MEN, THEY HAVE BECOME FOREVER ASSOCIATED WITH THE GANGSTERS OF THE DEPRESSION ERA"

Thompson was recalled to service when the US entered the war in 1917, and was promoted to brigadier general. He served as the director of arsenals throughout the war, overseeing the production of all military small arms. For his efforts, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal before again retiring at the end of 1918. The early prototypes of Thompson's gun came too late to fight the war they had been designed for, but they had suitably aggressive names: 'Persuader' and 'Annihilator'. One early model was capable of firing up to 1,500 rounds per minute – a completely uncontrollable rate of fire. By 1921, Auto-Ordnance had refined its SMG design and was ready for market.

With WWI over, Thompson looked to sell his gun to the general public. He travelled tirelessly to promote and publicise his submachine gun and its capabilities. In 1921 he embarked on a sales tour of Europe, demonstrating the weapon in France, Belgium, Britain and Spain. The British were impressed by the gun, praising it as handy and compact, however, post-war budget constraints prevented any purchases.

In 1927, Thompson tried again, demonstrating an improved model to the French army; they were unimpressed by its high rate of fire, and remained unconvinced of the need for submachine guns. However the US Postal Service was impressed, ordering 200 to protect the mail from violent thieves.

Its high rate of fire and large magazine capacity saw Thompson's gun catapulted to infamy as the weapon of lawmen and gangsters during the 1920s and 30s. The weapons quickly entered popular culture, becoming known as Tommy Guns (a name Auto-Ordnance quickly patented) or Chicago Typewriters. Two were infamously used during the infamous St. Valentine's Day massacre when 70 rounds (a full 20 round box magazine and a 50 round drum magazine) were emptied into seven members of the Moran Gang in a matter of seconds.

While the guns were often also carried by law men, they have become forever associated with the gangsters of the Depression era – the likes of John Dillinger, 'Baby Face' Nelson, the Barker gang and 'Pretty Boy' Floyd. The Tommy had the dubious honour of being one of the first guns subject to the 1934 National Firearms Act, which prohibited the use of automatic and concealable weapons by civilians in the US.

Despite decent sales to the public, by 1929 Auto-Ordnance was on the brink of liquidation.

The Thompson was simplified during the war to increase production rates and cut costs – the result was the M1A1

Without large-scale military contracts, Thompson's company struggled. During this time, only small batches of his submachine guns were purchased by the US Marine Corps for use overseas. The company had only sold 10,300 guns on the civilian market and carried a massive $2,200,000 debt. Despite overwhelming pressure, Thompson and his son refused to close the business, which was eventually saved by the outbreak of World War II, and the huge orders that came with it.

After the fall of France in June 1940, the British Army needed every weapon it could get and placed an open order for Thompson submachine guns. By April 1942, 100,000 Thompsons had arrived in Britain and they became a favourite of the new Commando units, who used them in raids on occupied Europe. The US military had already formally adopted the Thompson in September 1938 but did not order any guns until the summer of 1939.

By February 1942 over half a million Thompsons had been produced, with the simplified M1 and later M1A1 variants ready to arm troops in every theatre of operations, from the Pacific to North Africa to Europe. This was the final realisation of General Thompson's dream of equipping American troops with a small machine gun capable of delivering devastating firepower. However, Thompson did not live to see his weapon become a key part of the Allies' arsenal, as he died in June 1940. The gun soldiered on and saw service in Korea and Vietnam, with more than 2 million made.

THE FALKLANDS OUR WAR

WORDS TOM GARNER

35 years after the United Kingdom and Argentina fought in the South Atlantic, four British veterans recall their experiences of a ‘small’ war that had huge consequences

In April 1982, Britain was surprised to find itself at war with Argentina over a group of windswept, sparsely populated islands thousands of miles away. On 2 April, an Argentinean military force landed on the Falkland Islands and declared British rule to be over. This was the first invasion of British territory since WWII and the result would be a short but bloody war that decided the political fate of both countries.

The disputed ownership of the islands goes back to at least the early 19th century but the situation dramatically escalated after a change in Argentinean domestic policies. Since 1976, the Argentine Army had ruled the country under a military dictatorship that brutally suppressed human rights and sent inflation rates soaring. In an attempt to distract attention away from domestic problems, President Leopoldo Galtieri gambled on ‘reclaiming’ the Falklands (or ‘Malvinas’) in the hope that the British would not respond. He had not reckoned on the resolve of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher or the quality of the subsequent British Task Force sent to retake the islands.

After the war, the Argentine Nobel Literature Laureate Jorge Luis Borges wrote, “The Falklands thing was a fight between two bald men over a comb.” Nevertheless, for those who fought, the Falklands was an intense experience.

Despite being fought in a remote location, and for only a short duration of 74 days, 649 Argentineans and 255 British soldiers lost their lives. Moreover, there were almost 2,000 combined non-fatal casualties and three civilian islanders were killed. Tens of thousands of soldiers were also taken prisoner, the vast majority Argentinean, and the war is still an emotive issue in both countries.

Exactly 35 years on, four British veterans from all levels reflect on their experiences of fighting far from home in a war that was small in scale, tough in execution and significant in its ramifications.

In the 74 days British and Argentinian forces fought over the Falklands, more than 900 people lost their lives

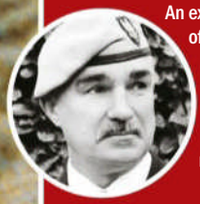
VICTORY AGAINST THE ODDS

JULIAN THOMPSON
1982 RANK: BRIGADIER

As commander of 3 Commando Brigade, Thompson was tasked with co-planning the San Carlos amphibious landings, and his brigade fought in all but one of the land battles.

INSIDE 'OPERATION MIKADO'

ROBIN HORSFALL
1982 RANK: CORPORAL



An experienced member of the elite Special Air Service (SAS), Horsfall was tasked with training for a 'suicide mission' into mainland Argentina.

"THIS WAS THE FIRST INVASION OF BRITISH TERRITORY SINCE WWII AND THE RESULT WOULD BE A SHORT BUT BLOODY WAR"

THE BATTLE OF WIRELESS RIDGE

PHILIP NEAME
1982 RANK: MAJOR

A former officer in 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment, Neame took part in one of the final battles to capture the capital of Stanley.

SURVIVAL, CARE AND RECONCILIATION

SIMON WESTON
1982 RANK: GUARDSMAN

One of the most high-profile veterans of the Falklands war, Weston was a Welsh Guardsman who was injured during the Bluff Cove Air Attacks aboard RFA Sir Galahad.

Royal Marines exercise on the flight deck of HMS Hermes during the war. The high professionalism of the British Task Force was a key factor in ensuring Argentina's defeat

Steel helmets abandoned by Argentine armed forces that surrendered at Goose Green, 21 May 1982

VICTORY AGAINST THE ODDS

MAJOR GENERAL JULIAN THOMPSON CB, OBE

THE CAMPAIGN TO RECLAIM THE FALKLAND ISLANDS FOR BRITAIN WAS A LOGISTICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL HEADACHE, BUT HARD WORK AND DEDICATION WAS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Landing craft from HMS Intrepid approach the beach at San Carlos to land troops of 3 Commando Brigade, 21 May 1982

After the invasion there was very little time to assemble a task force to sail and reclaim the islands. One of the chief organisers of the swift response was Brigadier Julian Thompson. Now a retired Major General, Thompson was then in command of 3 Commando Brigade.

This highly trained force consisted of three commando units of Royal Marines (each battalion size) and two battalions of the Parachute Regiment. Along with extra units of artillery, engineers, logistics and helicopters, Thompson commanded 5,500 men and the brigade made up the bulk of the land element in the task force. His immediate mission was to plan and execute the initial amphibious landings on East Falkland with his naval opposite number Commodore Michael Clapp.

HOW WAS NEWS OF THE WAR BROKEN TO YOU? WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION?

At the end of March 1982, I was in total ignorance that we were going to be required until I was woken up in the early hours of 2 April by my boss, General Jeremy Moore, who rang and said, "You know those people down south? They're about to be invaded."

I immediately knew I had to get to the brigade to prepare, load and sail south. This was Friday and we had to sail on Monday and Tuesday. We didn't have long to prepare, and to my horror I realised at 3am that most of my staff were still in Denmark. There was a lot of work to be done.

WHAT WERE THE PRACTICALITIES OF PLANNING THE SAN CARLOS LANDINGS?

In any amphibious [operation] the question is, 'Where do you land?' [On] a map, the islands appeared to present myriads of places where it would be possible. We were lucky because we had an officer called Ewen Southby-Tailyour who had previously served in the Falklands and was very clued up on the various advantages and disadvantages of the beaches.

What you really need is a beach with a gradient that isn't too steep but not too shallow. This is so you can get in close to shore so people don't have to wade for yards.

There were several different factors that we had to sort out: we needed the ability to get off the beach; for example, it's very foolish to land on a beach with a high cliff behind it. We also need elbow room to deploy troops, including putting Special Forces ashore…

This all takes time and you need to work out how you're going to do it. Are you going to do it by helicopter, landing craft or a combination of both? Where are the troops going to come from? Which ships are they going to be unloaded from? There are a lot of procedural things you need to get right.

"A GUY STUCK HIS HEAD AROUND THE CORNER AND SAID, 'ATLANTIC CONVEYOR HAS BEEN SUNK'. IT WAS A 'TEAR-IT-UP-AND-START-AGAIN' DAY"

DID RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MEN UNDER YOUR COMMAND INFLUENCE YOUR PLANS?

I was responsible not just for them but also, with Michael Clapp, for the success of an operation, which if it failed would probably bring down the government and be a slap in the face for Britain for the next 500 years. It was a quite a heavy responsibility but I didn't dwell on it because I had to get on with it.

I'd been in the Royal Marines by then for about 20 years and even though I'd been doing amphibious exercises, I'd never done an operational landing before. I had been the commanding officer of a commando unit and done lots of practice landings, however, so I was actually doing something that wasn't new to me, thank heavens.

DID YOU HAVE ENOUGH RESOURCES AND SUPPORT TO EXECUTE THE LANDINGS?

The big shortage was helicopters. We didn't have enough and this was a great limitation when it came to building up supplies moving forward, because although the troops could walk or go by landing craft to beaches on the way, the heavy kit had to be lifted. The guns, artillery and ammunition had to go something

like 60 miles in a straight line. When in fact, because of the terrain, they couldn't actually fly straight, so it took a huge amount of time.

It takes something like 50-60 helicopter sorties to fly one battery of six guns plus ammunition for a battle. To make things worse, it was in the middle of winter so it got dark at around 4pm and light at 7am, and the helicopters couldn't fly at night.

There were a huge number of limitations caused by the lack of helicopters. This would all have been put right had the four Chinooks, plus some other helicopters that were travelling south in a ship called the SS Atlantic Conveyor, all arrived, but she was sunk before she could offload them. Only one Chinook survived, which happened to be away when the Exocet hit.

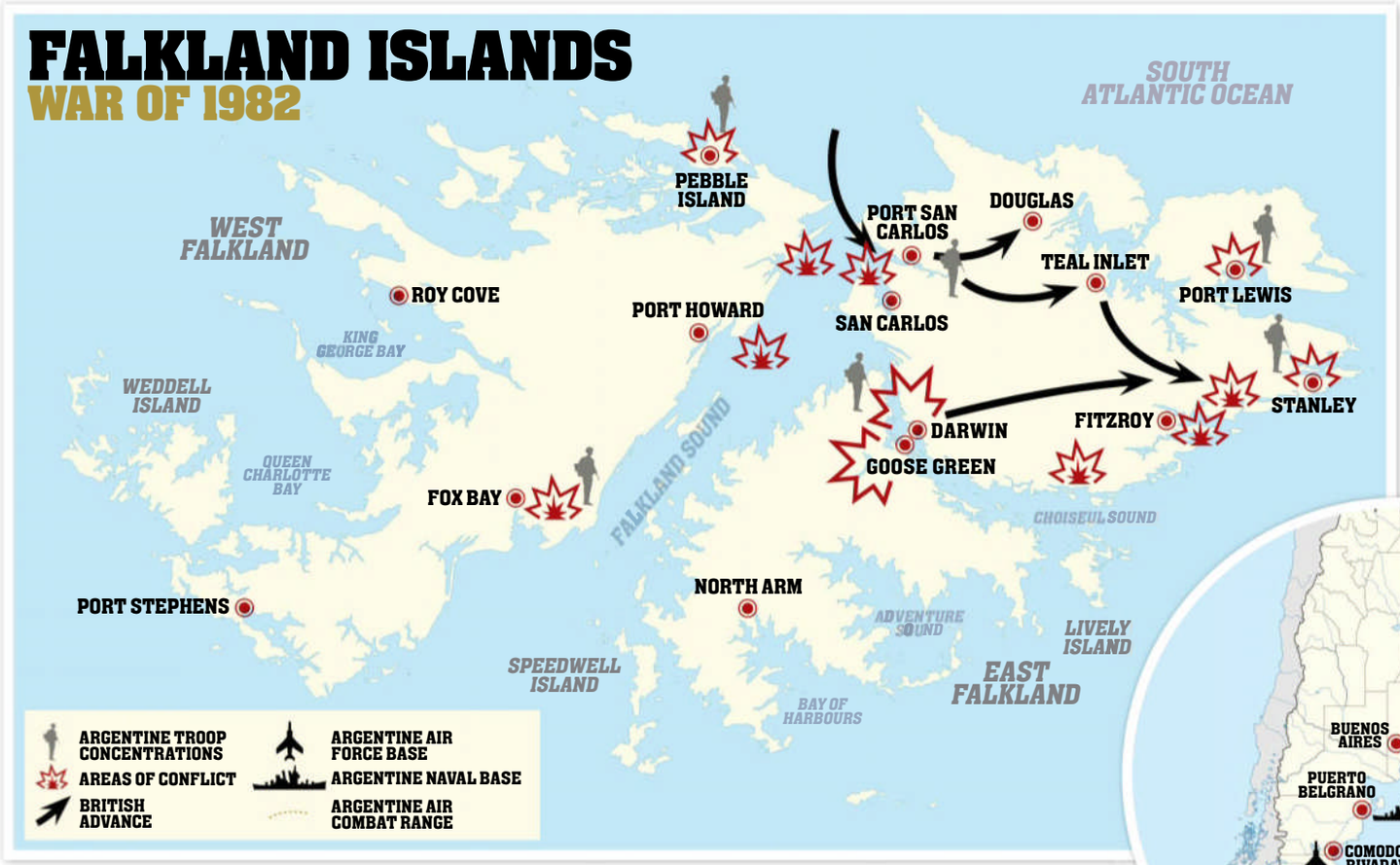
I can remember it vividly. I was planning the move forward by helicopter and a guy stuck his head around the corner of the command post and said, "Atlantic Conveyor has been sunk." It was 'tear-it-up-and-start-again' day.

These things happen and the trick is to expect problems and not be thrown by them. You've got to be flexible, resilient, expect chaos to reign and work through it.

WHERE WERE YOU POSITIONED DURING THE LANDINGS THEMSELVES?

I was in the amphibious ship HMS Fearless with my staff and there was a purpose built ops room. My job was to get people ashore and then control them afterwards. Therein lay another problem, which was that the maritime radio sets in HMS Fearless were much more powerful than the radios ashore. Initially, we had no communications from the shore, which was extremely frustrating.

Thompson (seated left on rock) with Major General Jeremy Moore outside brigade headquarters in the area of Mount Kent, 13 June 1982



This was not unexpected, but it was pretty serious. I spent the first bit of the landing in the ship and then decided that it was a complete waste of time and I wasn't finding anything out. The answer was to get into a helicopter and go and talk to people, which is what I did.

I found it was very helpful doing that because you don't want to be a commander and not know what is going on. It's a very demoralising position to be in and the only thing that ever comes back is bad news.

The bad news on this occasion was that two of my helicopters had been shot down with the loss of four aircrew. What were they doing and why had they been shot down? You need to find out that sort of thing and the only way you'll do that is to get off your backside and get ashore.

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU WENT ASHORE, WERE THERE ANY ENEMY PLANES OR COMBAT INCIDENTS?

There were enemy planes going over and you dodged them. They didn't pay much attention to the small helicopters, they probably didn't even see you. They weren't interested in what was going on ashore. It's quite difficult if you're in a fighter jet to even see people if they're properly camouflaged. So actually, it wasn't dangerous in that sense because curiously enough, the enemy aircraft weren't bothered.

YOU'VE SAID: "THERE WAS A FEELING WE'D WIN BUT MANY WOULD DIE." DID IT FEEL LIKE A PERILOUS MISSION?

Absolutely, I was convinced we'd win but I thought that the Argentine Air Force would wreak havoc for ships and landing craft. In fact, they didn't and this was partially because they targeted the wrong ships. To start with they decided to target warships, but if they'd gone for logistical landing ships they would have caused absolute chaos. Fortunately they didn't.

Although I was confident, I expected extremely heavy casualties and I'm happy to say that they weren't as bad as we had anticipated. They were heavy enough but were under a third of what we had estimated.

WHAT WAS MORALE LIKE ON THE GROUND?

The men were in tremendously high spirits. Here they were at the end of seven weeks practicing, actually doing something they were trained for. There was also a feeling of, 'Thank God we got off those ships before we all got sunk!' Everyone was in good spirits.

"THEY SURRENDERED 800 YARDS FROM WHERE I WAS, AND I FOUND OUT FROM THE BBC"

By the second day, my HQ and I were ashore. From there, I could go and see people quicker than I could from a ship fighting for its life.

The problem that then came was the time it took to get all the ammunition and guns ashore before we could move off. We weren't going to win the war by sitting in San Carlos.

ONCE THE LANDINGS WERE OVER, HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU?

I was very satisfied but I couldn't rest on my laurels because the next thing was to get to Stanley. I ordered 2 Para to capture Goose Green. The campaign wasn't going as well as it might have been and we didn't seem to be getting anywhere. I can understand that and Goose Green was a diversion from the main push forward to Stanley. It used up resources but it was a very successful battle. It did a lot of good and helped morale.

While that was going on, the bulk of my brigade were going in an opposite direction by helicopter or on foot towards Stanley and the high ground overlooking it. We had to hold that position to use as a base for our attacks against the Argentines defending Stanley.

HOW DID YOU FEEL THE CAMPAIGN WENT?

The difficulties were moving the guns and ammunition and the logistic supplies to fight the battles. Obviously, the battles themselves were difficult too but I had every confidence in the competence of the [men].

The blokes on the ground win the battle and all the commander can do is put them into the right position. They're the people who are going to win it, from the commanding officers right down the youngest marine. My job was to put them into the position where they could win and support them when they were there.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE ARGENTINEAN FIGHTING ABILITY?

Not all that high, which wasn't their fault… Most of their troops were conscripts. They were all over 18 but the problem was that their training was inadequate. They didn't use the time that they had available, which was six or seven weeks, from the time they invaded, to when we arrived, to put right deficiencies in their training. They just sat around – I learned one of the reasons why is that they didn't think we'd ever actually land.

It's a very interesting mindset because one of the biggest traps you can fall into in war is to say, 'We wouldn't do that, so therefore they won't.' You have to assume that the enemy will be as nasty and as crafty as anyone. In war, there is no room for complacency.

WAS IT A RELIEF WHEN THE ARGENTINES SURRENDERED AT STANLEY?

Yes it was. I learned about the surrender when I was on the outskirts of Stanley with my brigade and we'd been told by General Moore not to advance any further. I was in this house on the outskirts of Stanley with B Company, 2 Para. It was dark because the electricity had been turned off and one of my radio operators swivelled his high-frequency set to *BBC World Service*, which they did every night. I suddenly heard, "The Argentines are signing a surrender in Stanley." This was happening about 800 yards from where I was standing and learned about it from the BBC 8,000 miles away!

The chap involved was an interpreter and a member of my staff, and had been actually been trying to find me for an hour. He eventually found me and I said, "I've just heard something on the radio" and he said, "That's correct, I've just come from interpreting for General Moore and they've surrendered."

That was the most wonderful news because it meant that no more of my men were going to have to die or be wounded. We had won. We did what we came to do.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WAR 35 YEARS ON?

When people say to me, 'Was it worth it?' I say, "Go and visit the Falkland Islands." The island population is almost twice what it was in 1982. It is self-sufficient except for defence and the defence is equivalent to 0.01 per cent of the total defence budget, so it isn't that big.

I gather it's a totally different place from what it was before 1982. They had no future and now they have one. It's a vibrant society and that's what the guys laid their lives down for. They can rest easy because they did it.

As for the soldiers I commanded, I admired them so much. They were the best soldiers and marines in the world.

HMS Antelope explodes in San Carlos Water on 23 May 1982

Brigadier Thompson (centre, with pipe) soon after walking into Stanley on 14 June 1982. Lighting a cigar on the far left is the journalist and broadcaster Max Hastings who was then the correspondent for the Evening Standard

The P&O cruise liner SS Canberra off South Georgia in May 1982. Thanks to naval defence cuts, the British Task Force had to requisition passenger ships as troop carriers

"ONE OF THE BIGGEST TRAPS YOU CAN FALL INTO IS TO SAY 'WE WOULDN'T DO THAT, SO THEREFORE, THEY WON'T.' YOU HAVE TO ASSUME THAT THE ENEMY WILL BE AS NASTY AND AS CRAFTY AS ANYONE. IN WAR, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY"

INSIDE OPERATION MIKADO

CORPORAL ROBIN HORSFALL

THIS AUDACIOUS BUT HIGHLY FLAWED MILITARY PLAN WAS EFFECTIVELY A SUICIDE MISSION FOR THE SAS, DEEP IN ENEMY TERRITORY

Mikado was the codename for a notoriously cancelled British military mission that aimed to destroy Argentinean jet fighters that carried the fearsome Exocet anti-ship missiles. These weapons were a significant threat to the British Task Force but the plan required B Squadron SAS to land on the runway of Río Grande, Tierra del Fuego, in two C-130 Hercules aircraft. The airbase was on the Argentinean mainland, so attacking it was widely considered to be a suicide mission with little hope for the SAS to escape alive.

One of B Squadron who was expected not to return was Corporal Robin Horsfall. Having joined the British Army at the age of just 15, at just 17 he joined the Parachute Regiment and served three tours of duty in Northern Ireland during the 1970s, before joining the SAS aged 21. In 1980, Horsfall played a significant role during Iranian Embassy Siege in London, where he shot and killed one of the terrorists during the SAS storming of the building.

By 1982, Horsfall was only in his mid-20s but he trained to take part in an operation that he thought would kill him.

WHEN THE INVASION HAPPENED, HOW SOON DID YOU PREPARE FOR ACTION?

As soon as the conflict began, B squadron was allocated this task of going into Argentina to take out the Argentinean jets called Operation Mikado. G and D Squadron flew down to Ascension Island and we were left behind in the UK to prepare for that. That's the only thing we focused on until we were deployed.

WHAT WAS YOUR BRIEFING FOR MIKADO?

We would be flying from Brize Norton to Ascension, from where we would fly in two C130 Hercules aircraft along with all of our vehicles, ammunition and missiles, to Río Grande in Argentina. We would land on the runway, drive off the back of the aircraft WWII-style, shoot up as many aircraft as we possibly could destroy – the Super Etendards that were carrying the Exocet missiles – then either get killed or captured.

WERE YOU WERE AWARE OF THE THREAT POSED BY THE EXOCET MISSILES?

By the time we reached Ascension, two Atlantic conveyors had already been sunk by such missiles, so it was very clear that the way the military viewed it was to sacrifice an SAS squadron, save an aircraft carrier, and win the war. That was the military perspective.

It became clear later that the Argentines only had five Exocet missiles mounted on aircraft and once those had been fired, they really couldn't get hold of any more. Even when there was only one left, our brigadier still wanted us to go down and do the mission.

WHAT DID YOUR TRAINING INVOLVE FOR THE OPERATION?

We had two Special Forces flight C130s allocated to us at regular periods in the UK. We practiced mounting the vehicles, putting ramps down the back so we could drive straight off, chaining them in the aircraft to make them safe. We flew up to small places off the Scottish coast and landed the two aircraft one behind the other – on one occasion the front aircraft braked too early and the other nearly crashed into the back of it, which would have written us off before the mission even saw 'go'.

We weren't allowed to tell anybody – my wife was pregnant at the time – so it was top-secret. We practiced repeatedly until the day came that we were sent on our way to carry out the mission, but it was frequently postponed until eventually the mission was cancelled.

WHAT IN YOUR OPINION WERE THE MAIN FLAWS OF MIKADO?

There were many flaws. There was a huge overconfidence in Special Forces operations but they weren't really managed at a higher level. A lot of cowboy ideas were allowed free rein – we were going to fly these two aircraft down into what was a fairly sophisticated military organisation with good ground-to-air radar and surface-to-air missiles protecting their aircraft, on a war footing.

British target practice on Ascension Island in 1982. The SAS endured an agonising wait on the island to get the go-ahead for Operation Mikado

***Inset above:** Horsfall (second from right) returning with a paratrooper patrol in Belfast, 1976*

We were very unhappy about it because we didn't think we were going to get on the ground in the first place, we thought we were going to get shot out of the air. Once we were on the ground, we would have carried out our mission and that would have been it. We were fairly unhappy about the fact that this idea of just flying two aircraft down and landing them on the runway was in any way achievable. The brigadier at the time was adamant that this was how he wanted it done. I think it was a crazy mission. We wanted to change it so that we would parachute just off target then walk, but the brigadier would have none of that.

HOW DID THE SENSE THAT THIS WAS A SUICIDE MISSION AFFECT MORALE?

Our squadron commander questioned the viability of the mission and was sacked, along with one of the staff sergeants. They were replaced. The rest of us decided that this was why you wear a cap badge, why you're in Special Forces and these are the kinds of missions you're expected to do. So we got on and did the job – fortunately we didn't die.

HAD THE MISSION GONE AHEAD, WHAT PLANS WERE THERE TO MAKE IT TO THE BORDER. WITH THE ANDES IN BETWEEN, COULD IT HAVE BEEN DONE?

I don't think so – the nearest border with Chile was 80 miles away over very mountainous terrain, and winter was coming. The chances we had were to either be killed or be captured; there wasn't much of a chance of evacuation or escape. The reconnaissance patrol managed to get out to Chile, but they were flown close to the border.

***Above:** Due to the almost suicidal nature of Operation Mikado, Horsfall did not expect to see the birth of his first son. Happily, the operation was cancelled and his son was born four days after the Argentine surrender*

***Above:** The task of B Squadron SAS during Operation Mikado was to destroy Super Etendard fighter jets that were armed with Exocets. This aircraft, Sue 204, was used in the attack on SS Atlantic Conveyor*

THE EXOCET THREAT

THE FEARSOME FRENCH-BUILT MISSILE POSED A SIGNIFICANT DANGER TO THE BRITISH TASK FORCE IN 1982

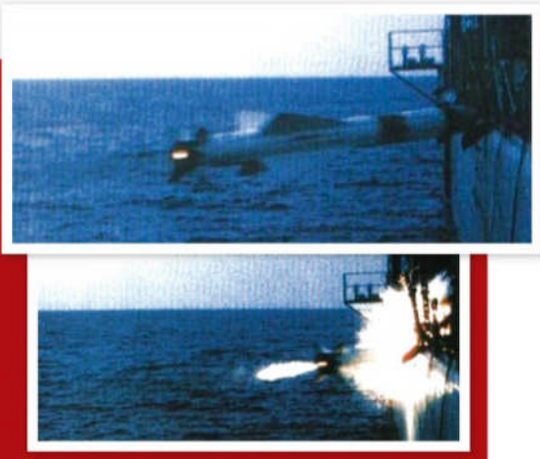
The Exocet is a French-built anti-ship missile that can be fired from ships, submarines or aircraft. 'Exocet' translates as 'flying fish' in French and was first developed in the 1970s.

The missile is an internally guided, rocket-powered weapon that can reach a top speed of Mach 0.9 (1,130 km/h). Its main advantage is its low-flight altitude of one to two metres above water. This means that it can often avoid detection and counterattacks from surface-to-air missiles, thereby increasing its hit probability.

Throughout the 1980s, the state-owned French company Aérospatiale manufactured Exocets that were extensively sold to Argentina. Most of their Exocet stock was ship-launched MM38s, but these were unsuitable for aircraft operations. In contrast, the Argentine Air Force only had five air-launched AM39s, but these were more than enough to wreak havoc on the British Task Force.

In 1982, Argentinean AM39s were used to sink HMS Sheffield and transport ship SS Atlantic Conveyor. An MM38 also damaged HMS Glamorgan. In the case of HMS Sheffield, the missile did not actually detonate but the energy of its impact and its exploding unused fuel caused enough damage to sink the ship.

In total, 46 British naval and merchant personnel were killed in Exocet attacks during the Falklands War and the sinking of HMS Sheffield in particular was a heavy blow for the British. The Exocet is still in production today but arguably its most notable moment occurred during the Falklands War.



***Above:** Two sequential stop-frame images of an Exocet MM40 missile striking a test target*

"THE ENERGY OF ITS IMPACT AND ITS EXPLODING UNUSED FUEL CAUSED ENOUGH DAMAGE TO SINK THE SHIP"

YOU HAVE SAID THAT "WAR WAS BRINGING OUT THE BEST AND THE WORST IN THE SAS." CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

I think the lack of leadership was a big part of it. The Special Air Service was really conceived after Malaya as a reconnaissance unit, very highly motivated men who would carry out recce missions behind enemy lines and then come back and bring infantry in to carry out main attacks.

It had also been a bit of a cowboy unit that had broken loads of rules. It had a lot of small specialist operations that weren't really overseen by anybody higher than the level of colonel. When you get involved in a major operation like the Falklands, those kinds of habits revealed an awful lot of weaknesses. You had guys trying to do infantry tactics that they'd never been trained or prepared for because they'd only come from corps.

People had been over-promoted after the Iranian Embassy Siege too, to ranks that they really weren't qualified for. All these things showed very strongly and internally within the regiment. A lot of us were younger, probably better-prepared infantrymen who had the qualifications – we'd done our junior and senior training and education promotion certificates. We knew how to teach and lead platoons and use infantry tactics but we were very often subject to people who didn't have those experiences. That created a lot of friction.

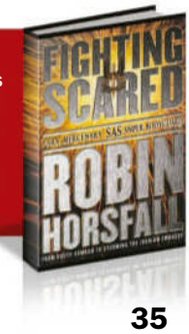
ON GOING TO THE FALKLANDS, YOU SAID YOU, "WORE THE CAP, HAD THE PRESTIGE AND NOW YOU NEEDED TO BE WORTHY OF IT." CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

To become a paratrooper, you really have to be quite a wild young man. To become a Special Forces soldier you have to put your life on the line just to get through the selection process. It has to mean a great deal to you. I was a bullied kid and I was very driven to prove that I was as good as the next man. I'd worn the badge, had a few tours of Ireland, and the Iranian Embassy, as well as many other things around the world, but this was the Real McCoy. Do you have the balls and the bottle (or stupidity) to go forward and do it? You realise how completely expendable you are for the policies of your country and your generals.

YOU'VE SAID THAT THE BRITISH LIBERATED ARGENTINA AS WELL AS THE FALKLAND ISLANDERS DURING THE CAMPAIGN?

A right-wing military junta controlled Argentina. They had huge problems with murder and people vanishing – they called them 'the disappeared'. It was a tyrannical government that considered murder to be the norm and they used the Falklands as a distraction to deflect public opinion. When they lost that war against us, the Junta failed and they ended up with a democratic government for the first time in many years. So from my perspective, when we freed the Falkland Islanders, we also freed the Argentinians from that tyrannical government.

Fighting Scared is Robin Horsfall's action-packed autobiography that details his fascinating military career. First published in 2002, it is now available as a Kindle edition on Amazon.
For more details visit: www.amazon.co.uk/Fighting-Scared-Robin-Horsfall-ebook



A dead Argentinean soldier at 2 Para's final objective on Wireless Ridge. Around 25 Argentine soldiers were killed compared to three British troops during the battle

BATTLE OF WIRELESS RIDGE

LIEUTENANT COLONEL PHILIP NEAME

THE FIGHT FOR STANLEY WAS A TOUGH, BUT ULTIMATELY SUCCESSFUL BATTLE FOR THE BRITISH, THAT WITNESSED THE FINAL COLLAPSE OF ARGENTINEAN FORCES

By June 1982, Argentinean forces were in full retreat on the Falkland Islands and the British began to hone in on the capital Stanley. The British had made decisive breakthroughs in the Argentine defences at Mount Harriet, Two Sisters and Mount Longdon. The remaining advance to Stanley required the capture of strategic hills within five miles of the capital, including Mount Tumbledown and Wireless Ridge.

The battles here occurred simultaneously on the night of 13-14 June, with the Battle of Mount Tumbledown becoming the most famous. Nevertheless, Wireless Ridge was just as strategically important and the attack was led by companies of 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment (2 Para) and supported by artillery from 29 Commando, Royal Artillery and light tanks of the Blues and Royals Dragoons.

Among the paratroopers was Major Philip Neame. Now a lieutenant colonel, Neame was the commander of D Company, 2 Para and had already seen significant action at the Battle of Goose Green in late May. Wireless Ridge would be his last Falklands battle and he was mentioned in dispatches for his service during the conflict.

HOW DID YOU AND YOUR MEN FEEL ABOUT GOING INTO COMBAT AGAIN SO SOON AFTER THE BATTLE OF GOOSE GREEN?

I think all the Toms (British soldiers) and myself recognised that we were professionals but there was a bit of quiet muttering that said, "Couldn't someone else take this on?" However, that was quickly answered by, "Well no one else can do it better than we will!"

WHAT WERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED UP TO THE BATTLE?

We had a brief rest of a few days where we had some sort of shelter. We also went on to 'central feeding' for the first time since we had been ashore, as opposed to being on 24-hour rations. The local farmer killed a sheep to throw in the central feeding pot but the net effect of that was 50 per cent of the battalion went down with the squits. That really hit us, myself included, after we had flown up by helicopter to reinforce 3 Commando Brigade.

We then had this night approach while all the other main battles were going on at Mount Longdon. During this approach, it was snowing slightly and we were marching in file order. Every time we stopped, half the battalion stepped to the side and lowered their trousers, which is not quite the situation you really want on an approach to battle! It could have been seriously demoralising.

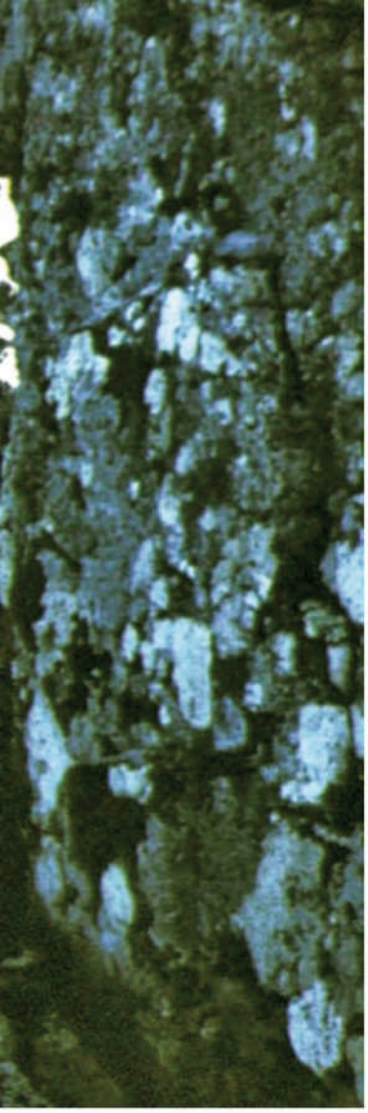
HOW REASSURING WAS IT TO HAVE GREATER ARTILLERY SUPPORT AT WIRELESS RIDGE THAN AT GOOSE GREEN?

We'd already won the first round of battles around Stanley and this was effectively the finale. By then, all the artillery that had been sent was available to support us so we had two full batteries of guns and abundant ammunition. We also had two ships with guns in support. So unlike Goose Green where we had minimal fire support and precious little intelligence, we went into Wireless Ridge in a completely different context.

We launched with abundant fire support and if there was a little unease about going into 'contact' again, that was undoubtedly allayed by the fact that we were promised abundant fire support and in the early stages of the battle we certainly had it.

WHAT WERE YOUR OBJECTIVES?

I had three objectives. I was working independently of the other two companies



On 14 June, 2 Para entered Stanley. The paratroopers were the first British soldiers to re-enter the Falklands capital and forced the Argentinean surrender

***Below:** British soldiers mopping up operations at first light on Wireless Ridge. The majority of the battle was fought at night*

***Below:** 'Endex' was the codeword for the end of the war. To celebrate the victory, the men of 2 Para donned their famous red berets on Wireless Ridge*

for most of the night and secured the first objective, which we nicknamed 'Rough Diamond'. It was almost a walkthrough. When A and B companies took their objective, which we called 'Apple Tart', they found much the same. The artillery and a troop of supporting light tanks had done the work for us and a lot of the enemy had fled. Those that remained didn't have a lot of fight left in them.

I took the next objective, which was called 'Blueberry Pie', with similar ease and it all seemed to be going very well until we got to the final objective. I got my FOO (Forward Observation Officer) to call up the final target but the rounds landed on us instead!

The British Army is very literal so when it came to getting tasks and resources, there were mix-ups. I didn't have a fully trained FOO and he called up the wrong target number.

Mistakes happen in war, one just has to be a bit phlegmatic about it, but I certainly wasn't at the time because we had thirty rounds of airburst on us! The battery signal sergeant tried to say that it wasn't our artillery but the Argentineans didn't have airburst so I knew very well that it was our artillery that landed on us.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT INCIDENT OF FRIENDLY FIRE?

We were very lucky, we only had one person killed and one person injured. It could have been devastating. I realised what had happened and I got the FOO to call the right target number. We then went through a long delay while he adjusted the target. I said, "You don't need to adjust the target, just call up the last one that landed on us" but by then the gunners' nerves had gone and they didn't want to do that.

"EVERY TIME WE STOPPED, HALF THE BATTALION STEPPED TO THE SIDE AND LOWERED THEIR TROUSERS, WHICH IS NOT QUITE THE SITUATION YOU REALLY WANT ON AN APPROACH TO BATTLE!"

I eventually got the target adjusted, called up a fire mission and then B Company claimed the rounds were landing on them! It appeared that some of the guns had gone out of alignment in the peat so once again we had to hold on and not put in our final attack.

All this went on for a good hour or more and I have to say that the saviour at that moment were the light tanks and the CVR(T)s of the Blues and Royals who were in the same position as A and B Companies. They were able to engage the final ridgeline while the artillery sorted out that pretty pathetic mess.

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU DID FINALLY ADVANCE?

It was interesting. There were discussions with the CO about when I was going to attack and I rather abruptly said, "When I get the artillery that's been promised." They were not helpful exchanges but these things happen.

Eventually we got four guns on target and I felt like there was no point waiting. We needed to get going. We attacked with four guns supporting us and had a quick-fire mission on the final objective. We were attacking from an unexpected direction and the enemy had been entirely focussed to the north where the CVR(T)s had been engaging them.

It was a surprise attack until we were crossing this low area between the two elements of that final ridge and one of the Toms set off a trip flare. The game was obviously up then and their small-arms fire turned on us. Everyone hit the deck fairly quickly.

That was a tricky moment. The natural thing is that you hit the dirt as quick as you can and hug it pretty tight. However, you can't stay there because you're in a killing zone so eventually we knew we had to get moving. That was down to the leadership at every level, it wasn't just me. There was a lot of shouting and trying to get our nerve up and eventually we got up. It was all the way down the line, platoon and section commanders did their bit to steel themselves up and as a group, we all launched forward.

We were quite lucky, we only picked up one other casualty at that point. A guy was killed but that was all. There was a wave of small-arms fire but most of it was going above our heads. It is a common thing at night that people tend to shoot high and so we closed into position.

Argentinean soldiers patrolling near Stanley. Many troops were conscripts

Once we were into the position I felt "That's it, the game is ours now" because after Goose Green, the Argentineans didn't have much stomach for close-quarters fighting.

HOW DID THE BATTLE EVENTUALLY END FOR YOU?

There was a lot going on and the CO was getting concerned that we might lose the position, but I don't think there was ever any risk of that.

Then daylight began to come up and we could see the enemy pouring off the top of Tumbledown. At that point, the harassing small arms and sniper fire ceased and we started to engage them with machine guns at maximum range. It wasn't particularly effective but it was better than nothing.

We eventually stopped that and tried to engage the enemy with our own artillery when we saw literally hundreds pouring off Tumbledown in single file. Further east, I could see similar numbers going out of Stanley up towards the top of Sapper Hill.

The CO came to join me and also witnessed this. He said, "Why aren't you engaging them?" and I said, "If we engage them all we're going to get is enemy artillery fire back. Some are observing us and it's almost out of range."

He thought we should engage. With some reluctance, I got one machine gun right up the end of the position to start shooting at these Argentineans coming off Tumbledown.

It was at that moment that we effectively saw the collapse of the Argentinean army. It was in moments: one moment they still appeared able to resist, fight and engage even if it was just with artillery, then ten minutes later… nothing. Their only intent appeared to be to flee to Stanley as quickly as possible. It was a dramatic moment really because it happened in a space of minutes.

The CO, David Chaundler, tried to put this across to commando headquarters that resistance had evaporated and we needed to hot-pursuit them into Stanley. Again, in much the same way that he hadn't quite believed my messages earlier, commando headquarters were also then reluctant to accept this. They couldn't see the army collapsing so quickly and it wasn't until Julian Thompson came up in a helicopter and saw with his own eyes this visible collapse that we managed to get the order to follow them into Stanley.

That was how 2 Para ended up being the first battalion into Stanley. I don't think that was the original plan because no one expected the Argentinians to collapse.

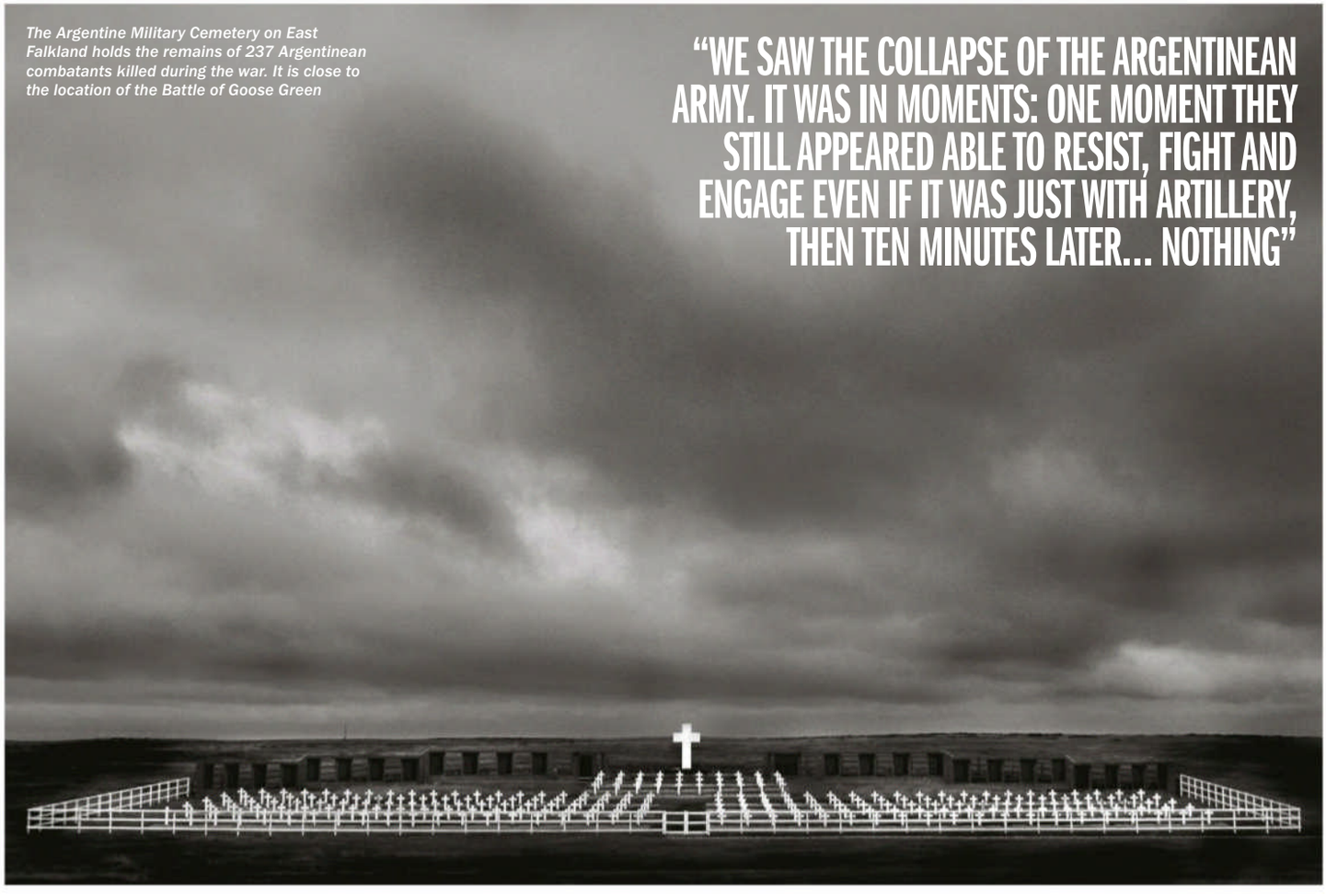
WERE YOU ONE OF THE FIRST MEN WITH 2 PARA TO ENTER STANLEY?

Yes. A Company initially led the way and then D Company and myself followed, we were right behind them. They secured the racecourse and we ended up holding the easternmost part of the town. We were told to stop just short of Government House because it appeared that negotiations were going on with Mario Menéndez (Argentine military governor of the Falklands) and they didn't want a storming of the house.

We were told to stop and make sure that no one advanced beyond there. Only one person did try to advance beyond there and that was Max Hastings from the *Evening Standard*. He proceeded to abuse one of my soldiers on the checkpoint so I said, "Let the silly bugger through and see if he gets shot!"

HOW SATISFIED DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU REALISED THAT THE WAR WAS EFFECTIVELY OVER?

It was indescribable. There was relief but for me there was real pride in my blokes. We'd had the lion's share, there was no question on Wireless Ridge that we'd had one or two setbacks with the artillery and we'd come through it. It was a very uncomfortable two hours before Tumbledown fell, it had been a really unpleasant time. Nonetheless, they had held their nerve and I was just overwhelmed with pride for them.



The Argentine Military Cemetery on East Falkland holds the remains of 237 Argentinean combatants killed during the war. It is close to the location of the Battle of Goose Green

"WE SAW THE COLLAPSE OF THE ARGENTINEAN ARMY. IT WAS IN MOMENTS: ONE MOMENT THEY STILL APPEARED ABLE TO RESIST, FIGHT AND ENGAGE EVEN IF IT WAS JUST WITH ARTILLERY, THEN TEN MINUTES LATER… NOTHING"

SURVIVAL, CARE AND RECONCILIATION

SIMON WESTON, CBE

THE FAMOUS VETERAN DISCUSSES THE FALKLANDS WAR 35 YEARS ON, HOW CARE FOR SOLDIERS HAS CHANGED DURING THE DECADES, AND BEFRIENDING HIS FORMER ENEMY

On 8 June 1982, the British landing ship RFA Sir Galahad was bombed by Argentine Skyhawk fighters in what became known as the Bluff Cove Air Attacks. A total of 48 soldiers and crewmen were killed in the explosions and subsequent fire. Scores more were injured including 20-year old guardsman Simon Weston.

Weston had joined the British Army aged 16 and had already served with the 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards in Berlin, Northern Ireland and Kenya. In the aftermath of the attack on RFA Sir Galahad, he was the most severely injured casualty to survive the incident, over the entire war, suffering 46 per cent burns. Weston spent the best part of five years in hospital and as of March 2017, he has undertaken 96 major surgical procedures.

Weston's long and courageous recovery became well known throughout Britain and despite his injuries, he threw himself into charity work. He is arguably the most famous veteran from the Falklands War and makes regular media appearances alongside public speaking and writing books. For his charity work, Weston was appointed an OBE in 1992 and CBE in 2016 among other numerous honours. Now associated with and the patron of several charities, Weston discusses the legacy of 1982, the current state of care for wounded soldiers and befriending the Argentinean pilot who bombed RFA Sir Galahad.

IN THE 1980S, WHAT WAS THE LEVEL OF CARE FOR YOUR PHYSICAL INJURIES COMPARED TO TODAY?

That's a bigger question than you actually think. Back then from the battlefield side of it, everything was a bit 'Heath Robinson'. We were in an old meat freezer/packing centre and they were using the rails and racks that they had for hanging and storing meat. It had fallen into disrepair – they were using these rusty racks as operating tables.

With regard to the treatment, it's important to understand that everything moves on. Nothing stays the same and in medicine, for somebody to benefit today, somebody had to suffer yesterday. Wound dressings are far more superior and stretchers are lighter. The training is better as far as field medicine is concerned for each private soldier. Equipment has greatly improved and more people are living today in conflict because of body armour, but then that means you've got more casualties with limbs missing.

It was totally different in our day. Kevlar is more prevalent now. It restricts the amount of injury but also restricts death. In the Falklands we lost 255 dead. If we had had body armour we might have been able to slash that number by half.

HAS CARE AND AWARENESS IMPROVED FOR SOLDIERS WITH INVISIBLE WOUNDS SUCH AS POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)? IF NOT, WHAT AREAS NEED IMPROVEMENT?

It has improved dramatically because in our day PTSD was totally ignored. It didn't exist and the Duke of Edinburgh said, "There's no such thing as PTSD, just a lack of moral fibre." That was the attitude back then and they refused to acknowledge it. Even though the Falklands guys were the first to present it, look for help and complain about it, a lawsuit was brought out so that they didn't have to spend money on us. The Falklands guys really got the crappy end of the stick.

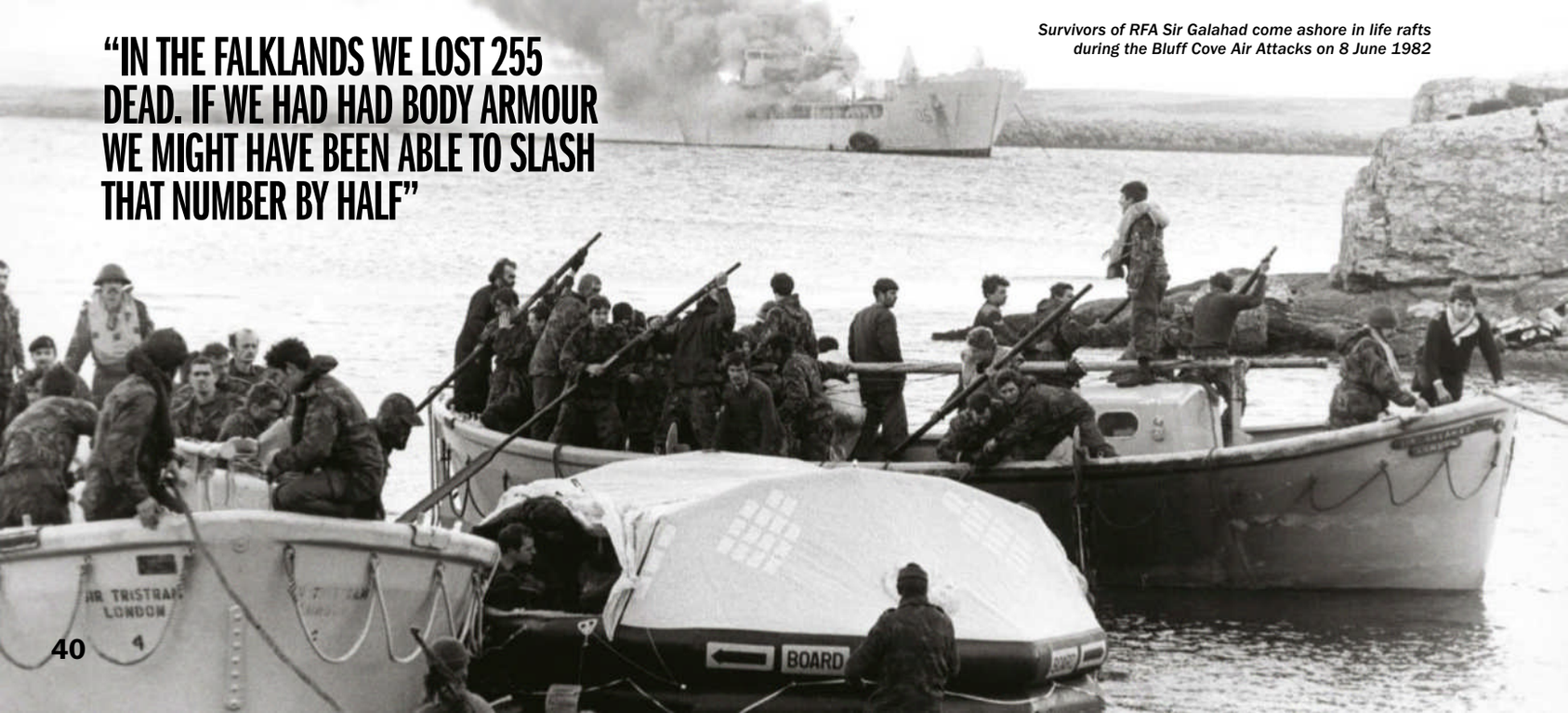
Things have improved but there's still a long way to go. For the other ranks like senior officers, they get the privilege of somewhere else to go, but ordinary soldiers rely on charity. Is that correct? It's the only thing available so we have to deal with what we've got. Is there enough money in the pot? No there isn't, so will we be able to change things that dramatically? Probably not, but it doesn't change the fact that it still needs doing. We still need it done. We still need to have people looked after.

YOU'RE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS A 'WAR HERO'. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT, BOTH WHEN IT'S SAID ABOUT YOU AND THE TERM IN GENERAL?

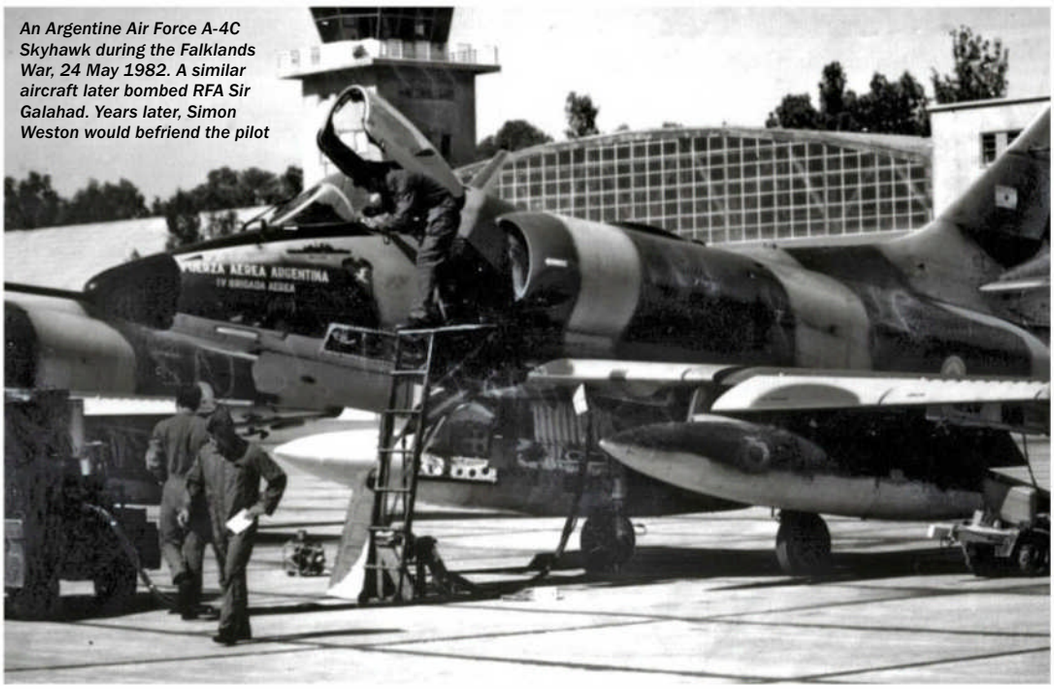
If people want to say those things, that's entirely up to them, I can't stop people being kind and generous. It's not what I see and if you talk to anybody else that gets that label, they don't see themselves like that either. I tried to help people inside the fire but when I realised I was burning and falling apart myself, then I realised that I had to get the heck out of there.

Heroes are made by other people. It's what other people say about you that creates the story. You do what you do at the time, you're not thinking about what's going to be said or written about you 20 years later. When I was on top of the ship, all I wanted to do was survive. When I was surviving in hospital and trying to keep my mind together, all I wanted to do was be the Simon Weston that I was before and I wanted to go back to the army and play rugby. Nothing that other people say is really what you think of yourself.

"IN THE FALKLANDS WE LOST 255 DEAD. IF WE HAD HAD BODY ARMOUR WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SLASH THAT NUMBER BY HALF"



Survivors of RFA Sir Galahad come ashore in life rafts during the Bluff Cove Air Attacks on 8 June 1982



An Argentine Air Force A-4C Skyhawk during the Falklands War, 24 May 1982. A similar aircraft later bombed RFA Sir Galahad. Years later, Simon Weston would befriend the pilot

HOW DID YOU COME TO BEFRIEND THE ARGENTINEAN PILOT THAT BOMBED RFA SIR GALAHAD (FIRST LIEUTENANT CARLOS CACHÓN) AND WHAT DOES THE RECONCILIATION MEAN TO YOU?

I was offered the opportunity to meet Carlos, which I was very dubious about. It was all arranged and at the last minute, I never met him. I almost didn't do it because I was running through a whole gamut of emotions. However, we did eventually meet and he actually got rid of my nightmares.

For ten years, my nightmares had been filled with a screaming black jet with this dark, hooded figure with demonic, flaming red eyes. I would wake up every night, my bed would be soaking and I would be on fire. I still wake up at two or three o'clock in the morning now, but the difference is I'm not on fire anymore.

Meeting Carlos helped me with all that. I didn't do it for anyone else and I make no apologies for it. I do apologise if it upsets some of my colleagues and those who lost people. It wasn't my intention, but sometimes you have to be selfish and do things that help you through life. The reasonable people in the world will understand why I did it.

There was also no 'reconciliation'. We'd been to war, he'd worn his country's uniform and I'd worn mine. We just met and got on, it's nothing bigger than that. We've stayed in contact and remained friends and the more we meet, the better our friendship goes. He wasn't the best man at my wedding, he wasn't the man giving blood to save my life: he was the man who blew us up. He killed 48 of my comrades and friends and he nearly killed me but that is all.

When he was told he was going to meet someone with mental problems because of what happened he said yes in a heartbeat, so he showed great moral courage. I will always thank him for that because it was war, it wasn't personal. We have to respect that side of it. Humanity must come into conflict at some point.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE RECENT EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY ARGENTINEAN WAR DEAD?

If they can identify them, why not? It gives families somewhere to go and lay their mementos and remembrance keepsakes. I think everyone should have a focus to go and grieve. You have to remember, they were somebody's son, dad, uncle and brother as well. They weren't evil people, they were just Argentinean soldiers. They were human beings the same as us.

DOES IT FEEL STRANGE FOR THE FALKLANDS WAR TO BE CONSIDERED AS HISTORY 35 YEARS LATER?

I'm glad to be answering this question 35 years on, and there are lot of boys who would love to be answering it too. The 48 men from that ship would love to get the aches and pains that I get every morning. The realities are that if you're still around to tell the tale 35 years on, it ain't been that bad.

To be classed as the worst injured to come back from the conflict, it feels like my life and somebody else's life all in the same token. I was only 20 at the time I was blown up, so you get all those perspectives and you think, 'Blinkin' heck!' It's all contradictions now, I hate being older but I'm so glad that I am.

The bombing didn't end my life, it just changed it and I have never wanted to be defined by what happened to me, but rather by what I did about it. I've been incredibly fortunate.

CARE AFTER COMBAT

Simon Weston is a trustee for Care after Combat, a UK-based charity providing professional assistance for the wellbeing of veterans and their families.

Their mission is to support veterans with alcohol and substance misuse problems and the reduction in numbers of re-offending veterans in the criminal justice system.

For more information visit: www.careaftercombat.org

AN ONGOING DISPUTE

THE BRITISH VICTORY IN THE FALKLANDS WAR HAD SIGNIFICANT RAMIFICATIONS IN BOTH THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ARGENTINA, AND ITS LEGACY IS STILL A TOXIC ISSUE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

The Argentinean defeat in the Falklands was a huge blow for the military junta, and Leopoldo Galtieri was forced to resign soon after the surrender in June 1982. Democratic elections were then held and military rule was finally ended after eight years in 1983. Argentina has been a democratic country ever since.

There were also significant developments in Britain. Margaret Thatcher had been elected as Conservative prime minister in 1979, but her first term was dominated by controversial economic policies and civil unrest. By 1982, she had become unpopular but the British victory in the Falklands boosted her premiership and in 1983, she won the most decisive general election since 1945. The war arguably boosted the global prestige of Britain and enabled it to shake off the perception of a nation in decline.

As for the Falkland Islands, the war cemented the islanders' resolve to remain under British rule. Since 1982, Britain has maintained a sizeable garrison on the islands and invested in the local economy. Income has been boosted by military expenditure, fishing licenses and tourism. In 2013, a sovereignty referendum held by the islanders voted 99.8 per cent in favour of remaining a British overseas territory and Prime Minister David Cameron acknowledged the result.

Nevertheless, after 35 years, Argentinean governments still dispute British sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, despite the war and the referendum. Bilateral relations were restored between the two countries in 1992 but the 'Malvinas' are still claimed as Argentinean territory.

It is a political situation that Julian Thompson acknowledges will probably never end, "I'm not dismayed by the current political posturing of the Argentineans, I expect it. I don't think it'll ever go away and we kid ourselves if we think it will. At the same time we must recognise that the people of the islands have the right to choose what government they live under."

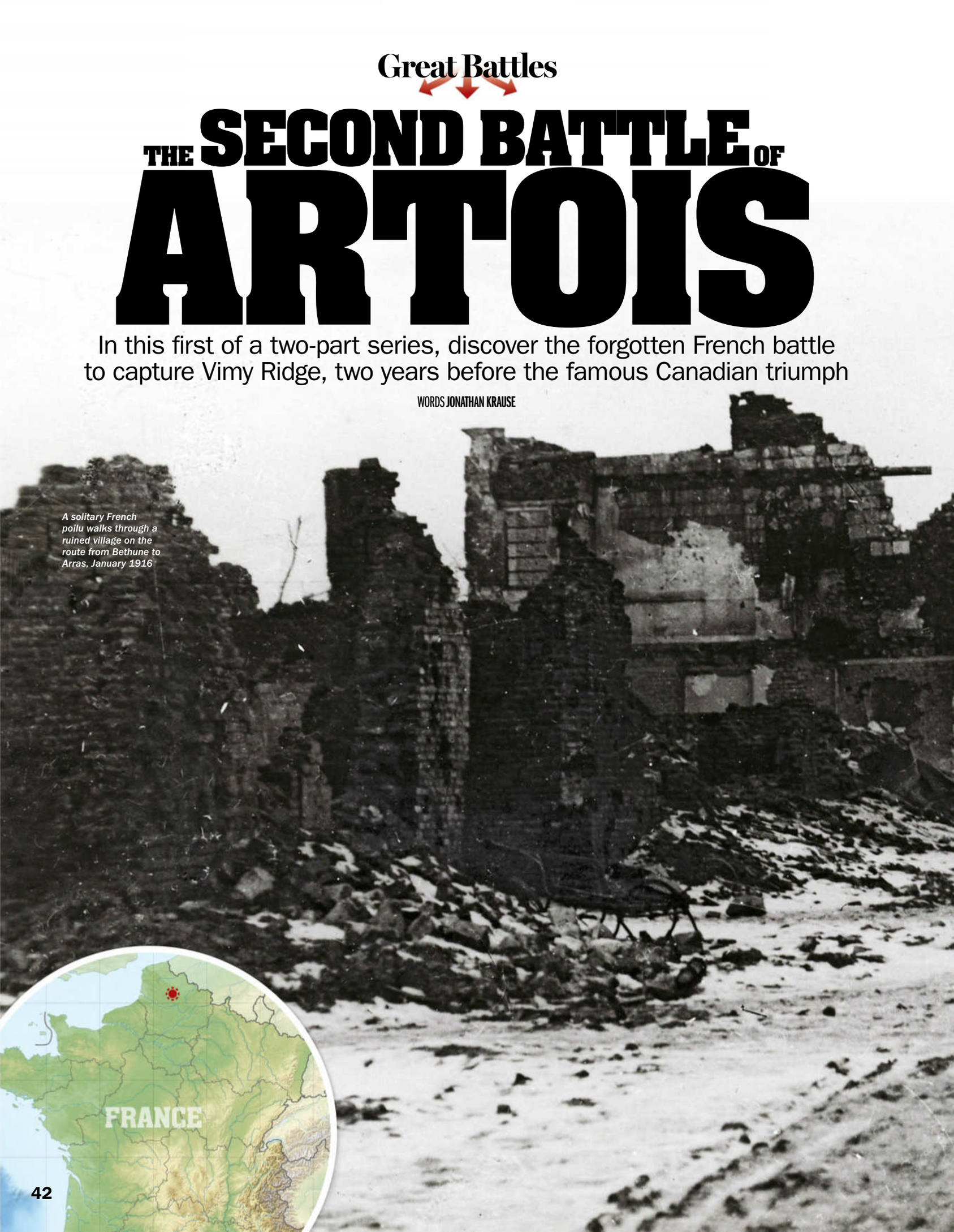
"A REFERENDUM HELD BY THE ISLANDERS VOTED 99.8 PER CENT IN FAVOUR OF REMAINING A BRITISH OVERSEAS TERRITORY"

Images: Alamy, Getty, TopFoto

THE SECOND BATTLE OF ARTOIS

In this first of a two-part series, discover the forgotten French battle to capture Vimy Ridge, two years before the famous Canadian triumph

WORDS JONATHAN KRAUSE



A solitary French poilu walks through a ruined village on the route from Bethune to Arras, January 1916

ARTOIS MAY-JUNE 1915

Drive along the road up from Neuville-Saint-Vaast into Souchez, a small town in between the imposing heights of Notre Dame de Lorette and Vimy Ridge, and as you enter you'll see on your left, next to a war memorial commemorating those who died in the Indochina Wars, a prominent statue of a man in World War I greatcoat and beret, leaning proudly forward underneath a winged victory.

The statue is in commemoration of General Ernest Barbot, commander of the 77th Division of Infantry, an elite alpine unit that stormed Vimy Ridge on 9 May 1915. They marched forward arm in arm with the Moroccan Division, another elite formation made up of long-service French regulars who had served in Morocco (not ethnic Moroccans) and Foreign Legion troops: mainly Greeks, Russians, Poles and Czechs.

Barbot was 59 at the time – old for a divisional commander. He had initially planned to retire early as a lieutenant-colonel (commanding the 159th regiment) in the years before the war broke out, but his life would change when a personal tragedy struck. In 1912, his wife and only child died in an accident. Distraught, he decided to devote the rest of his life to his beloved alpins.

Making colonel in 1914, Barbot was given command of the 159th and 97th alpine regiments, plus four battalions of chasseurs à pied, elite French light infantry. In October that year, this amalgam of elite soldiers under Barbot's command was the only French formation holding its ground against a furious German onslaught, aimed at capturing Arras.

Barbot was seemingly everywhere at once during the desperate fight, demanding that his men hold on at all cost and declaring that the Germans would never enter Arras. Against all odds they held, and the Germans pulled back.

For his personal heroism and unflagging leadership, Ernest Barbot was promoted to the rank of general and declared the Saviour of Arras. The two regiments and four battalions that had served under him were amalgamated into a new division under his command: the 77th. Of course, that's not what the men called it. For them, the 77th would always be La Division Barbot.

The division kept Barbot's name even after his death on 9 May 1915, the same day his division advanced four and a half kilometres in just an hour and a half, their best day of the war. Barbot was killed within hours of launching the attack. His command post, sited just 400 metres from the German front line, suffered a direct hit from an artillery shell. His grave is now up on Notre Dame de Lorette, along with 40,000 other mostly French soldiers who fought and died to secure Vimy Ridge and Notre Dame de Lorette from 1914-18. If you go there you'll see it as you enter the cemetery from the southern carpark, with Vimy Ridge looking over your shoulder. Barbot's headstone is on your left, in the front row, pride of place.

In 1915, the French army made two attempts to capture Vimy Ridge: the Second (9 May – 18 June) and Third (25 September – 14 October) Battles of Artois. Of the two battles, the second was the larger and more successful (the third battle was primarily a feint to draw attention away from the main effort further south at the Second Battle of Champagne). Both were part of a frenzy of activity up and down the front in 1915, as the French furiously threw men at the Germans in lieu of throwing the shells, grenades, and mortars that were still being built.

Despite how unready the French were for the scale and character of the fighting they would endure on the Western Front from 1914-18, they nearly pulled off a historic victory in May 1915 with a well co-ordinated attack against Notre Dame de Lorette and Vimy Ridge.

In the centre of the attack was XXXIII CA (Corps d'armée) commanded by later Marshal of France, and later still president and Nazi collaborator, Philippe Pétain. Under his leadership were three remarkable divisional commanders: the competent General Ernest Blondlat of the Moroccan Division, stoic and beloved General Ernest Barbot of the 77th, and the bitterly acerbic General Marie Emile Fayolle of the 70th (Fayolle would go on to command over 50 divisions in the Reserve Army Group, and became a Marshal of France after the war). Here we will primarily focus on the exploits of these divisions as they struggled up the slopes of Vimy Ridge during the Second Battle of Artois.

The battle erupted on 9 May 1915 to the sound of 783 field guns and 293 heavy artillery

"FOR HIS PERSONAL HEROISM AND UNFLAGGING LEADERSHIP, ERNEST BARBOT WAS PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF GENERAL AND DECLARED THE SAVIOUR OF ARRAS"

OPPOSING FORCES

FRANCE	VS	GERMANY
LEADERS Ferdinand Foch, Philippe Pétain, Victor d'Urbal		**LEADERS** Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria
INFANTRY 12 Divisions		**INFANTRY** 6 Divisions
GUNS 293 heavy guns 783 field guns		**GUNS** 150 heavy guns 660 field guns

French and German soldiers engage in a vicious melée at the hill of Notre Dame de Lorette, north-west of Arras during the Second Battle of Artois

pieces opening fire on utterly unsuspecting German defenders. Despite a build-up of French troops opposite them and a preparatory artillery bombardment that had preceded the attack by nearly a week, a sudden burst of bad weather had seemed to have derailed the French force's plans, or at any rate made it unclear when, or even if, they were ever going to attack. This surprise, combined with poor German preparation and the skill and tenacity of the attackers, led to the unsuspected success of the first day of the battle.

The primary French assault was aided by poor German preparation. The centre of the German position consisted of a mere pair of shallow defensive lines masking the approach to Vimy. Their primary purpose was not necessarily to defend the ridge, but merely to link together the more serious defensive positions at Neuville in the south and Souchez in the north. The XXXIII CA would rapidly overrun these weak positions on 9 May.

The first plan for the battle appeared on 24 March 1915. It was submitted to Joseph Joffre, commander in chief of the French army, by Ferdinand Foch, then commander of the Provisional Northern Army Group. Foch's plan envisioned the battle unfolding over a series of stages, each a small, carefully organised operation to capture a particular piece of terrain before the final assault would be sent to storm Vimy Ridge.

"WHILE THE CHANGE IN BATTLE PLANS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO CAPTURE VIMY RIDGE, THE FRENCH DID HAVE SOME ADVANTAGES GOING FOR THEM"

First the southern sector would attack, advancing on a line from Carency to Roclincourt and clearing the southern wing of the battlefield from the deadly German positions there, which would flank any premature assault on Vimy. After that battle had finished, a second offensive would be launched to the north to clear the Germans off Notre Dame de Lorette. The German positions there offered a commanding view of ground over which any assault on Vimy would have to cover. They could co-ordinate artillery fire and shoot down upon the advancing French from their flank, dooming any attack on Vimy to failure.

Last, the French, having secured both of their flanks and also advanced closer to the foot of Vimy ridge, would attack up and take the dominant high ground overlooking the Douai plains. The plan was sensible, achievable and well-conceived. Unfortunately, for some in the French high command, undoubtedly including Joffre, it simply was not fast enough. In between late March and early May, Foch's proposed three-step operation had been turned into a single, general offensive, with all phases happening simultaneously. In theory, as long as the entire French front advanced together at roughly the same pace they would be fine. If any part of the offensive stalled, however, it would expose the other sectors to withering enfilade fire. It was a bold, and needlessly risky plan to try to win a major strategic victory in a single blow; just the sort of victory the politicians and senior commanders of France felt that the nation required.

While the change in battle plans would undoubtedly make it more difficult to capture Vimy Ridge, the French did have some advantages going for them. Tenth Army, who would be commanding the overall attack, was flooded with the best men, guns and munitions the French had available. The vaunted XX CA, the 'Iron Corps' consisting of the 11th 'Iron' and 39th 'Steel' divisions, was moved in to secure XXXIII CA's southern flank.

The XX CA had once been Ferdinand Foch's command. Its role was to cover Alsace-Lorraine in the event of war, and was boldly pushed forward to liberate the lost territories in 1914. The campaign ended in defeat, and nearly disaster. Nevertheless, it remained an elite formation, and was tasked with capturing some of the most complicated defensive positions in the region: Neuville and 'the Labyrinth', a rat's warren of trenches and barbed wire covering the southern approach to Neuville.

The French also had substantial artillery for the battle. Whereas the French army had marched to war with only 303 heavy guns in total, in 1914 Tenth Army would have access to 293 for its attack on Vimy. Some of these guns were modern 155mm court tir rapide (short, rapid fire) Rimailho guns produced in the years immediately before the war; these were the best heavy artillery the French army had. Most of the artillery remained either field guns, like

French soldiers prepare for the advance towards Vimy Ridge. They would advance more than four kilometres in just 90 minutes

"THE BATTLE ERUPTED ON 9 MAY 1915 TO THE SOUND OF 783 FIELD GUNS AND 293 HEAVY ARTILLERY PIECES OPENING FIRE ON UTTERLY UNSUSPECTING GERMAN DEFENDERS"

the famous French 75, or ancient De Bange guns built in the 1870s and 1880s that had sat unused in fortifications for nearly 40 years. They were solid, rugged guns but were built before hydraulic recoil systems had been invented and consequently had a lamentably slow rate of fire; generally no more than one aimed shot per minute. They would struggle to keep up with the pace of modern warfare.

The French also had an ace up their sleeve: a new doctrine for the attack. Entitled 'But et conditions d'une attaque offensive d'ensemble' (Goal and conditions for a general offensive), this new doctrine, released on 16 April 1915, would set forth the groundwork for French attacks for the rest of the war. The doctrine established and codified a range of procedures usually attributed to coming about much later in the war (very often attributed to the Germans).

The new approach separated the infantry into assault waves and secondary 'trench clearers'. The assault waves would advance as far and fast as possible, bypassing enemy strongpoints and leaving them to be taken care of by subsequent waves (the basis for 'infiltration tactics', the intellectual bedrock for blitzkrieg).

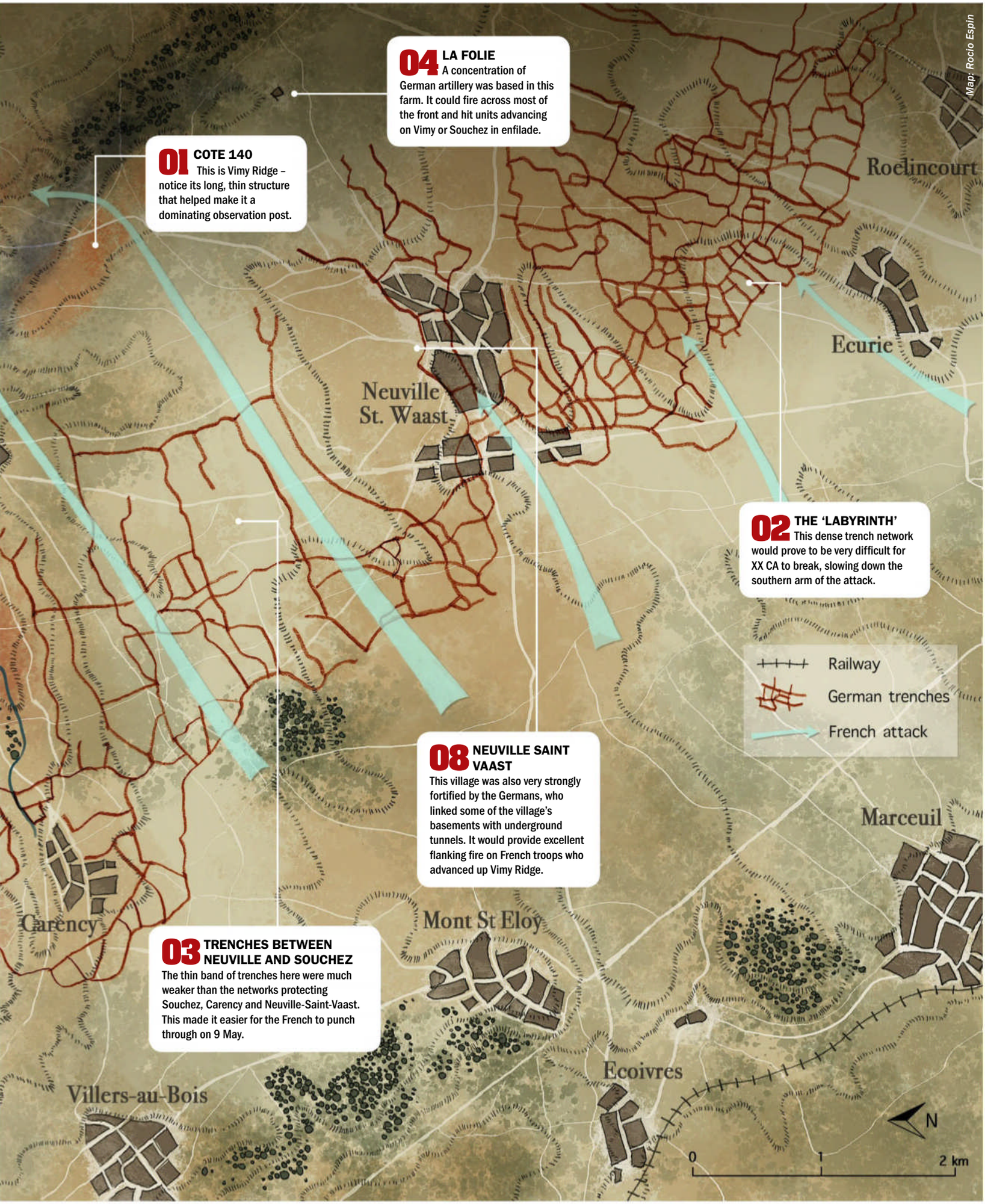
Secondary waves would be specially armed with grenades, revolvers and trench knives and trained for close-quarters fighting. Their job would be to mop up the strongholds bypassed by the assault wave. The new doctrine also codified the use of the rolling barrage, a slowly advancing wall of fire and steel that would mask the advance of the infantry, and keep the defenders' heads down until the last minute when assault forces would be able to overwhelm them before they could put up any organised resistance. Both tactics, in varying forms, would become critical parts of every major successful attack, French, British or German, for much of the war.

Manifest disarray

At 4.30am on 9 May, the assault troops of Tenth Army moved into their forward positions. At 6am, the final artillery preparation began. After an hour of careful, methodical registration and range-finding, the artillery opened up with full force at 7am, firing until 10am at which point the infantry surged over the top towards the German line. The advance was so rapid that a mere ten minutes into the attack, artillery batteries tasked with supporting the main assault of the 77th and Moroccan divisions were told to displace forward as soon as possible, lest the infantry outrun the range of their guns.

Under Blondlat's orders, the men of the Moroccan division advanced without their packs: only water, ammunition and perhaps a small bit of food. Speed and alacrity was the call of the day. The first two waves, later referred to as 'shock troops' in reports, carried out the new doctrine flawlessly, filtering past strongpoints and surging up the slopes of Vimy Ridge by 11.30am: they had advanced over four kilometres in 90 minutes.

By noon, secondary waves began reaching the men at the front desperately trying to push the Germans off Vimy Ridge, including French heavy machine guns. Observers remarked that it was like watching men manoeuvre over open terrain. The last orders Blondlat gave before the attack was sentimental, "You know I love you like my own children. If you want to show that you love me too, fight well and kill as many boches as


04 LA FOLIE
A concentration of German artillery was based in this farm. It could fire across most of the front and hit units advancing on Vimy or Souchez in enfilade.
01 COTE 140
This is Vimy Ridge – notice its long, thin structure that helped make it a dominating observation post.
Roclincourt
Ecurie
Neuville St. Waast
02 THE 'LABYRINTH'
This dense trench network would prove to be very difficult for XX CA to break, slowing down the southern arm of the attack.
Railway
German trenches
French attack
08 NEUVILLE SAINT VAAST
This village was also very strongly fortified by the Germans, who linked some of the village's basements with underground tunnels. It would provide excellent flanking fire on French troops who advanced up Vimy Ridge.
Marceuil
Carency
Mont St Eloy
03 TRENCHES BETWEEN NEUVILLE AND SOUCHEZ
The thin band of trenches here were much weaker than the networks protecting Souchez, Carency and Neuville-Saint-Vaast. This made it easier for the French to punch through on 9 May.
Ecoivres
Villers-au-Bois
N
0
1
2 km
Map: Rocio Espin

German prisoners of war captured during the battle

French forces entering the town of Clarency observe the damage left behind by the Germans

you can!" Some men of the Moroccan Division advanced so far, so quickly, they passed Vimy Ridge altogether, winding up in Givenchy-en-Gohelle behind Vimy's northern shoulder and wound up suffering friendly fire from their own 75s. One soldier from the Moroccan division later recalled glancing back from Vimy Ridge over the ground they had covered, saying that, "the enemy camp [was in] manifest disarray; we met some local resistance here and there, but nothing more organised than that was encountered."

Blondlat ordered the reserves forward at 10.30am. By 1.30pm, General Victor d'Urbal, Tenth Army commander had learned of Moroccan division's success and ordered parts of the 18th division forward to reinforce them. They would not arrive at the front line until 5.15pm, by which time they were exhausted, having marched for eight kilometres and suffering grievous casualties to German counter-bombardments. This weakening of the push as it got to Vimy Ridge would prove fatal. The attack just did not have the impetus to push the Germans off the ridge. The French troops began to dig in on Vimy, desperately trying to hold on to their foothold.

The 77th Division performed similarly. By 11.30am, its forward-most units were mixed in among the Moroccan Division in Givenchy and on Vimy. Part of the division had wheeled north to tackle Souchez and had been caught in fierce fighting in the heavily defended cemetery. Difficulties in observation and liaison, coupled with the loss of Barbot and most of his staff, meant that the 77th was not able to push forward reserves as quickly as the Moroccans had. The attack stalled, and the 77th ultimately had to pull back out of Souchez, to a line running parallel to the Neuville-Souchez road.

Unfortunately, no other sector had anything like the success enjoyed by the 77th and Moroccan divisions that day. To the south the XX CA, despite all their professionalism and preparation, were stopped after a short advance into Neville and the Labyrinth, a dense network of trenches and barbed wire that masked the approach to the city. They would spend the next month fighting house to house in brutal, close quarters combat before the small town was finally back in French hands. The Germans had fortified the squat, stone houses and connected many of their basements with an underground network of interlinking tunnels. It was a formidable defensive position.

To the north progress was equally slow. The 70th division under Fayolle made steady, but slow progress in their sector, which was littered with strongly fortified villages. On Notre Dame de Lorette, the XXI CA advanced only 200 metres. Under different circumstances this would not have mattered. In the specific context of Second Artois, however, their slow advance was catastrophic. As a result, the 77th and Moroccan divisions faced German fire from 360 degrees. They were cut off from meaningful help; any reinforcements had to pass through withering fire to get to them, and they could hardly move without being cut down. They stayed in these positions for three days, making a second attempt to push the Germans off Vimy Ridge on 11 May, to no avail. After a mere 72 hours, the 77th division was exhausted, the Moroccans virtually annihilated.

Under cover of night on the 11/12 May, the Moroccan division was relieved and sent to the rear to rest and recuperate. They would not see any more action for another six weeks. To commemorate their effort and sacrifice, there now rests a small, poorly maintained monument atop Vimy Ridge, marking the spot of their furthest advance.

Further attempts

After the tantalising near-success of 9 May, the French would make two further attempts to capture Vimy. On 16 June, another 9 May-style attack was launched. This time the XXXIII CA was in more of a support role, having allowed the fresh IX CA to take the central position. While sound in theory, the attack was impractical. The line had become distorted and twisted after a month of hard fighting, and the IX CA suffered from mediocre leadership and morale.

Despite Pétain expressly voicing his concerns that his corps might again find itself advancing too far too fast and becoming isolated, the IX CA failed to advance very far and did not cover his flank. The Moroccan division again had the best day, advancing 1,000 metres and taking hill 119

Above: Soldiers of the XX CA wearing gas masks propel poison gas shells towards the German forces

"IF THERE WERE ANYTHING TRULY NOTABLE ABOUT THE FIGHTING IN MID-JUNE 1915 BEFORE VIMY, IT WAS THE FIRST EVER DEPLOYMENT OF ASPHYXIATING GAS VIA ARTILLERY SHELL"

(which the Canadians rechristened 'the pimple'). Once more they were isolated and suffered withering enfilade fire. Again they were required to pull back after suffering heavy casualties.

If there were anything truly notable about the fighting in mid-June 1915 before Vimy, it was the first ever deployment of asphyxiating gas via artillery shell.

After the German deployment of clouds of chlorine gas on 22 April 1915, the Entente powers rapidly moved forward with their own poison gas programmes. The British would launch an analogous chlorine attack on 25 September. The French, however, did not have enough spare chlorine to do the same. The nation had been short of chemicals before the war, and relied on Germany for imports of key materials. During the war they had to turn to the Americans, which limited their supply of industrial chemicals, and increased their price. Since chlorine was critical for the manufacture of high explosives, the French instead created a totally unique poison gas of carbon disulphide and phosphorus which, when detonated, would combine to create a gas that was both asphyxiating and incendiary.

The French had 10,000 of these new gas shells to support the attacks on 16 June. Shells fired into Souchez had little effect; the town was already rubble by this point and there was little to ignite. Shells fired deeper into the German rear were more successful. By the afternoon, German-held Angres was in flames.

The most stunning success, however, was on the XX CA front. They fired their gas shells into La Folie, a farm tucked just behind the southern shoulder of Vimy Ridge where German batteries had been able to fire on French positions from enfilade, granting them near impunity. XX CA flooded the area with poison gas shells and silenced the German artillery for 90 minutes. It was an absolute revelation and set the stage for how poison gas would be used for the rest of the war: artillery and enemy neutralisation.

It might be tempting to see the Second Battle of Artois as merely a failed attempt to take a strategic piece of high-ground. In reality, however, the battle was important in a few distinct ways. Its foundational doctrine and conception would go on to change how war was fought on the Western Front. The use of primitive infiltration tactics, the diversification of infantry soldiers, and the use of sophisticated artillery techniques like the rolling barrage were all critical steps forward for fighting in trench warfare. That they all came so early in the war should be striking. The same can be said of the early French use of poison gas in a forward-looking neutralisation role, rather than using it as a 'wonder weapon' by floating clouds of gas towards enemy infantry.

The French battles for Vimy Ridge, both Second and Third Artois, also moved the line forward substantially. The Canadian conquest of Vimy Ridge in April 1917 would simply not have been possible if their forces had been starting out from the same positions that the 77th and Moroccan divisions had two years earlier. The Canadian start line ultimately ended up being three kilometres forward from where it had been on 9 May 1915. Undoubtedly, The French battles set the stage for later successes, both at Vimy and elsewhere.

FURTHER READING

- ✪ **PYRRHIC VICTORY: FRENCH STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS IN THE GREAT WAR** BY ROBERT DOUGHTY
- ✪ **RING OF STEEL: GERMANY AND AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AT WAR, 1914-1918** BY ALEXANDER WATSON

Images: Alamy, Getty, TopFoto

The museum is located in central London, right next door to the famous Royal Hospital Chelsea

Introducing the new...

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

After months of painstaking refurbishment, one of London's leading military museums is finally open to the public

The National Army Museum is the leading authority on the history of the British Army. Founded in 1960 by Royal Charter, it collects, preserves and exhibits objects and records relating to the land forces of the British Crown.

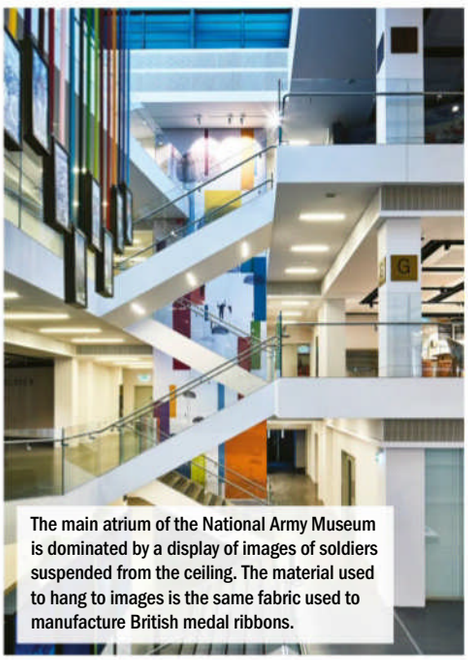
The museum archives more than 1.3 million objects, including 70,000 prints and drawings, 55,000 printed books, 3,670 maps and charts and 80,000 uniforms.

For the past three years, NAM has gone through a radical transformation in a £23.75 million redevelopment project, which includes £11.5 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The main site at Chelsea has been reconfigured to create a welcoming, accessible and flexible environment. By 2026, annual visitor figures are predicted to reach 400,000.

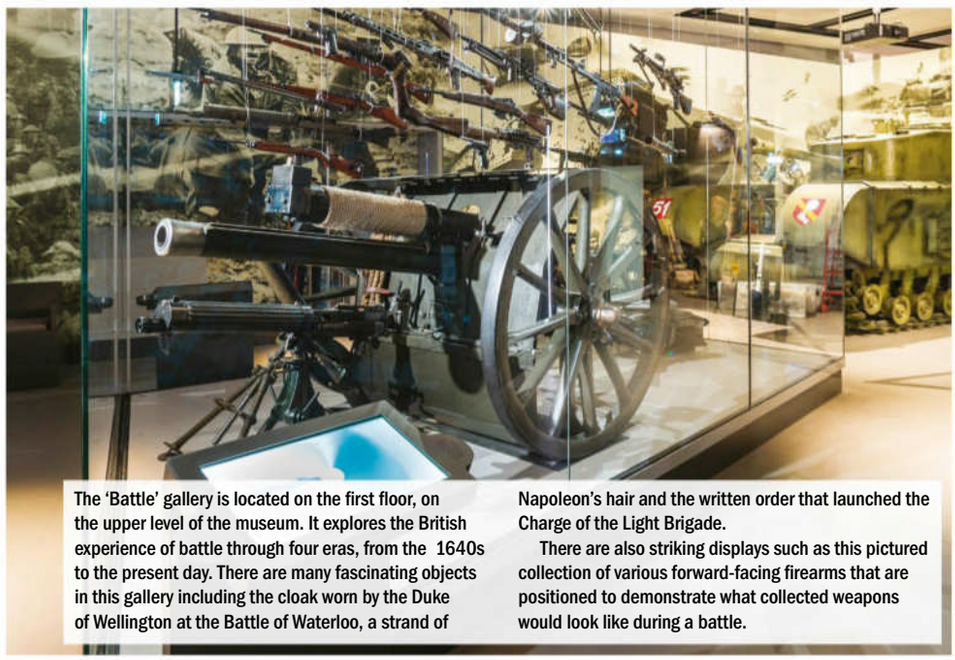
Reopened on 30 March 2017, the new museum building houses more than 2,500 objects in five permanent thematic galleries laid out over four floors called 'Soldier', 'Army', 'Battle', 'Society' and 'Insight.'

In addition to the new galleries, there is also a 500 square metre temporary exhibition space, study centre, three-room learning centre as well as a brand-new café, shop and educational "Play Base" for children up to seven years old.

The museum offers fantastic opportunities to experience Britain's military history in a highly innovative and dynamic environment.



The main atrium of the National Army Museum is dominated by a display of images of soldiers suspended from the ceiling. The material used to hang to images is the same fabric used to manufacture British medal ribbons.



The 'Battle' gallery is located on the first floor, on the upper level of the museum. It explores the British experience of battle through four eras, from the 1640s to the present day. There are many fascinating objects in this gallery including the cloak worn by the Duke of Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo, a strand of Napoleon's hair and the written order that launched the Charge of the Light Brigade.

There are also striking displays such as this pictured collection of various forward-facing firearms that are positioned to demonstrate what collected weapons would look like during a battle.

The 'Desert Rat' greets visitors. In 2014, the 7th Armoured Brigade invited the artist Anna Redwood to join them in Afghanistan and they collaborated to create this giant metal rat.

The 'Desert Rat' has been the emblem of the brigade since WWII and Redwood worked with army engineers and metalsmiths to weld the rat from vehicle parts no longer required on operations in Helmand Province.

"THE MUSEUM ARCHIVES MORE THAN 1.3 MILLION OBJECTS, INCLUDING 70,000 PRINTS AND DRAWINGS, 55,000 PRINTED BOOKS, 3,670 MAPS AND CHARTS AND 80,000 UNIFORMS"

The 'Society' gallery is located on the first floor, upper level of the museum. It explores the army as a cultural force and its impact on customs, values and choices. It covers genres as varied as fashion, fiction, journalism, toys, music and benevolence.

Notable exhibits range from Florence Nightingale's famous 'lamp', an early Royal British Legion poppy, a proclamation issued by Charles I, Lego minifigures and board games.

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

WAR PAINT

BRUSHES WITH CONFLICT

Below: Emma Mawdsley is Senior Research Curator at the National Army Museum

War Paint is the first temporary exhibition in the new museum and will run from 30 March until 19 November 2017. Over 130 paintings and objects dating between the 17th and 21st centuries explore the complex relationship between war and the men and women who map, record, celebrate and document it. Speaking before the opening of the exhibition, Senior Research Curator Emma Mawdsley explains the unique relationship between war and the military.

WHAT WAS THE IDEA FOR CREATING AN EXHIBITION BASED ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ART AND THE ARMY?

The idea behind this exhibition was that people have always painted conflict from the earliest times and there are various reasons why they do that. It is to explore the different reasons why people paint. For instance, we have examples of mapping the topography of places where the army was sent across the globe to places like India, North America etc. Soldiers were trained in survey and map topography so they quite often explored parts of the world that hadn't been mapped before.

HOW VARIED IS THE GENRE OF WAR ART?

Hugely, which is why we've arranged it into different sections. We have the first section, which is 'Surveying the World.' Then we have 'Drawing on Experience', which talks about how soldiers have painted in leisure time. Some did it in their spare time, some of their art was based on what they had seen or sometimes they saw there was a commercial audience for their material.

This leads on to our third section, which was called 'Selling War', which is a lot more of the grand historical battle paintings and also illustrations that were produced in magazines. Before photography, these were the images that represented the battlefields of faraway countries. There was the *Illustrated London News* and Simpson's *Seat of War in the East* for the Crimean War, so these were quite important publications. There were also works for art galleries if people wanted a painting of a famous battle.

Then we go onto 'Political Agendas', a section that covers the agendas behind why people are painting about battles. It can be to glorify a conflict or document the army's presence. By surveying land you are saying, "We own, manage and control this land." There are also antiwar protest paintings as well with political agendas.

The last section we have is called 'Making Memory'. That talks about how paintings have sometimes been commissioned for a centenary or other anniversaries, to commemorate the fallen or things like the official war art scheme to make sure that people didn't forget a particular conflict like WWI or WWII. There are also paintings drawn by soldiers who want to make sure that people have an understanding of their experience as well.

THERE ARE EXAMPLES OF WAR ART RANGING FROM THE 17TH TO THE 21ST CENTURIES. IN YOUR OPINION, HOW DOES THE PERCEPTION OF WAR IN ART CHANGE THROUGH THE CENTURIES?

I think today we are much more critical. There is certainly a lot more protest and questioning in some of the modern pieces than in the jingoistic imperial paintings. Also, the audiences are different because today we have other images of conflict so the artists have to try and bring in something different. It's not just a document like a photograph, its more interpretation and bringing things together.

One of the things we are also trying to do in the exhibition is to bring out the artist, so quite often we try to use quotes from what

◀ 'DEFENCE OF THE CHATEAU DE HOUGOUMONT BY THE FLANK COMPANY, COLDSTREAM GUARDS' DENIS DIGHTON, 1815

This is one of the most famous paintings of the Battle of Waterloo and was sketched on the field a few days after the battle. Dighton was the 'Military Draughtsman' to the Prince Regent and the Chateau de Hougoumont was a strongpoint in the British defensive line

The French failed to take Hougoumont despite nine hours of continuous fighting. Although Dighton's watercolours are well regarded, he did not witness the battle and imagined the dramatic fight outside the chateau's walls

▼ 'LIEUTENANT COLONEL RANDOLPH EGERTON MP IN THE NETHERLANDS' JAN WYCK C.1672

The modern British standing army was established by Charles II in 1660. This painting by the Dutch artist Jan Wyck is one of the earliest representations in colour of the King's regimental uniform and in particular, the 'redcoat'. Although they first appeared in the New Model Army during the British Civil Wars, this is probably the first depiction of a British soldier wearing one. Colonel Egerton is wearing the uniform of the King's Troop of Horse Guards on a battlefield possibly during the Third Anglo-Dutch War of 1672-74

they've said they wanted to do. Artists such as Gerald Laing are saying, "Who would remember Guernica if there wasn't a famous painting about it?"

Photographs come and go. There are of course iconic photographs that people remember but quite often, it is the paintings that document conflict.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE AMONG THE ARTWORKS AND IF SO FOR WHAT REASON?

It's a painting of the Battle of Ulundi by an artist called Yvon. It's the final battle of the Anglo-Zulu War, after the disastrous Battle of Isandlwana and the defeat of King Cetshwayo.

The painting was designed to be the IMAX of its day. It was created on a curved surface in a public space like a panorama. You stood in the middle and it was meant to give you the feeling of being on the battlefield. A portion of it is missing unfortunately, it is in South Africa, but it's the closest thing to giving you an experience of being in the middle of a camp with a battle raging around you. The King's kraal is on fire in the background and there is smoke all around you. I think it is very evocative.

'AN EAST VIEW OF THE GREAT CATARACT OF NIAGARA, BRITISH AMERICA' CAPTAIN THOMAS GRANT DAVIES, ROYAL ARTILLERY, 1762

Like all cadets at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, Davies was trained to draw and during the Seven Years War (1756-63) he surveyed the area around the Niagara River

Davies's watercolour is the earliest known eyewitness representation of the Niagara Falls and he painted a number of views to make sure that it was accurately recorded. The two Iroquois men in the foreground are members of a powerful Native American confederacy and the painting was completed just before Canada passed from French to British control.

'THE BATTLE OF ULUNDI, SOUTH AFRICA, 4 JULY 1879' ADOLPHE YVON, 1880

Ulundi was the final, decisive battle of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 but the more famous defence of Rorke's Drift and the disaster of Isandlwana have eclipsed the British victory

Yvon's celebratory painting of the victory was originally displayed in a venue on Oxford Street in London in 1881. The panorama was intended to be displayed on a curved surface to create the illusion of being on the battlefield

'WARRINGTON ROAD, 1917'
RICHARD TENNANT COOPER C.1926

During WWI, Cooper was the official war artist for the newspaper *The Graphic*, and he continued to paint military subjects after the Armistice. This painting is one of his starkest works.

British soldiers habitually nicknamed well-travelled routes on the Western Front and 'Warrington Road' was a track on the Ypres Salient. These duckboard walkways in the flat landscape exposed troops to sniper and artillery fire but the alternative could mean getting lost or falling into a waterlogged shell-hole.

"THESE DUCKBOARD WALKWAYS IN THE FLAT LANDSCAPE EXPOSED TROOPS TO SNIPER AND ARTILLERY FIRE BUT THE ALTERNATIVE COULD MEAN GETTING LOST OR FALLING INTO A WATERLOGGED SHELL-HOLE"

The National Army Museum is located on Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, SW3 4HT and is easily accessible via the London Underground or bus. The nearest Tube station is Sloane Square, which is a ten-minute walk away, or the 170 bus stops outside the museum.

From 30 March 2017, the museum will be open daily from 10am-5.30pm (last admission is 5pm). It will be closed 25, 26 December and 1 January but open until 8pm on the first Wednesday of every month.

For more information about the museum and the reopening visit: www.nam.ac.uk

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

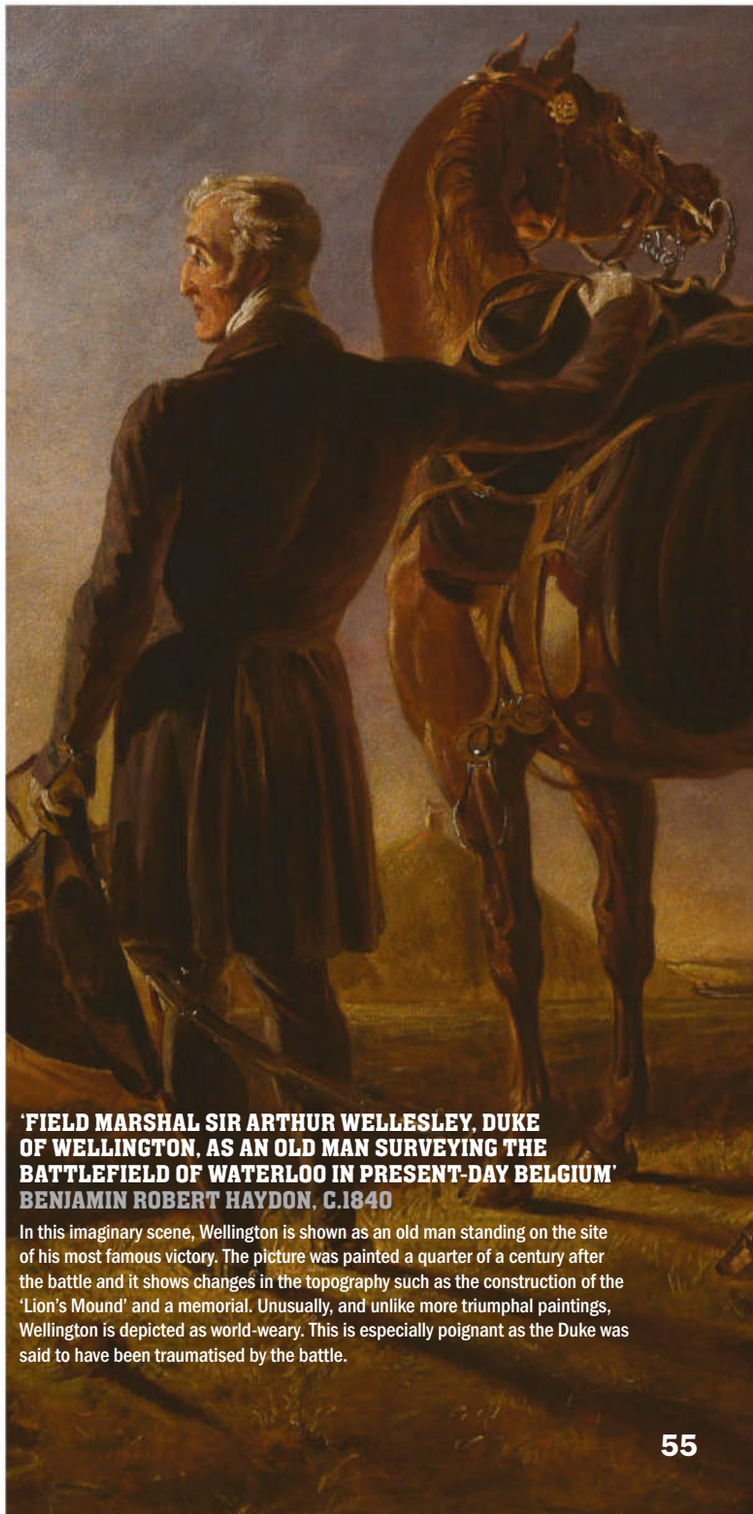
'REPETITION, 2004-05' GERALD LAING, 2005 ▶

Laing had been an officer in the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers before becoming an antiwar painter and celebrated pop artist. His feelings towards the Iraq War of 2003-11 were fuelled by his own experiences as a soldier and he completed a series of antiwar paintings about the conflict.

In *REPETITION, 2004-05*, Laing used pop art devices to comment on the war, including repeated images of Coalition soldiers below a pixelated view of a burning Baghdad.

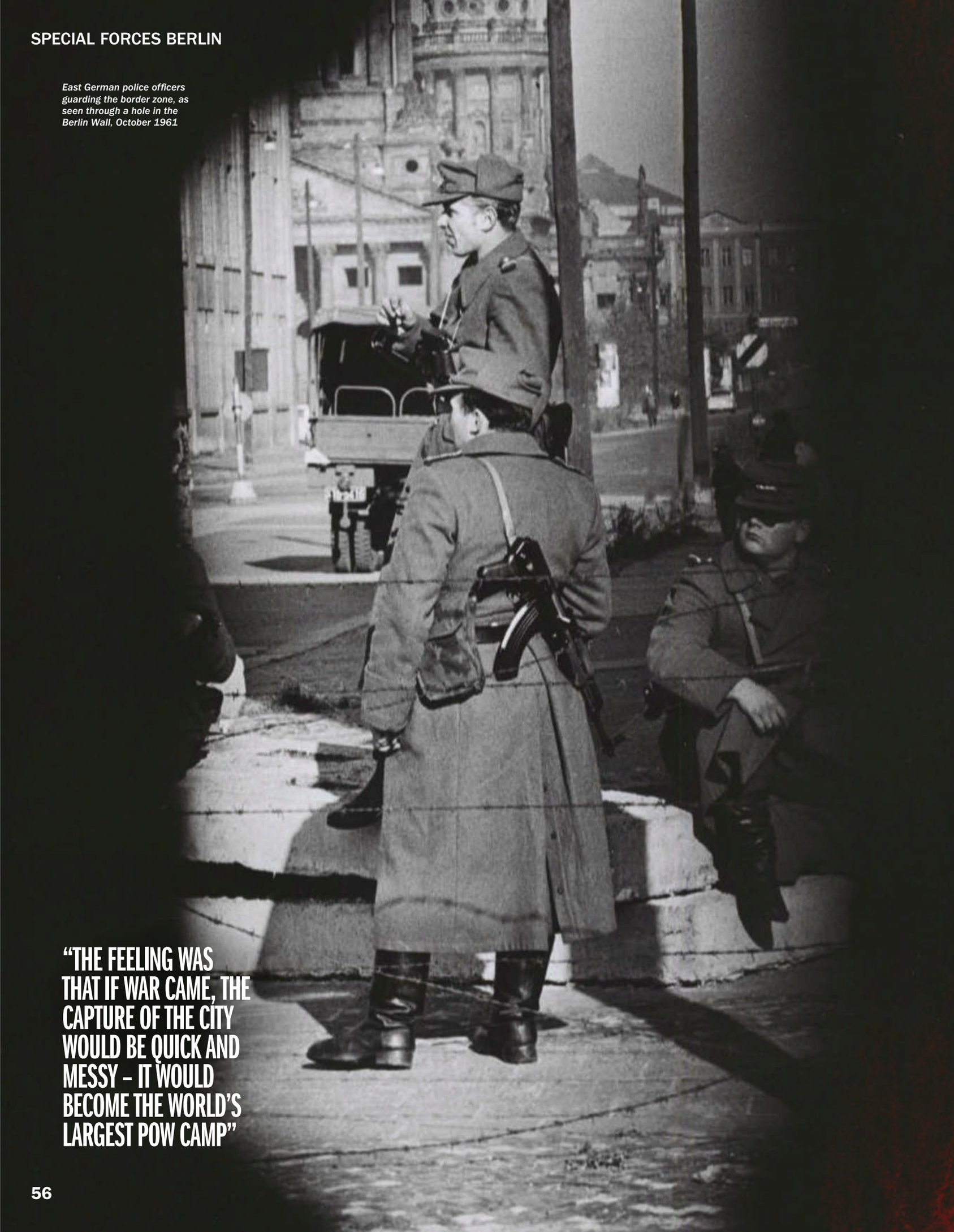
'SCARS' STAFF SERGEANT RICHARD SALTER, ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS, 2016 ▶

Salter has served in the British Army for 20 years, including operations in Bosnia and Afghanistan. In *Scars*, he hints at the physical and non-physical scars that all soldiers carry. Salter's work concentrates on the emotional impact of conflict on soldiers and civilians stating: "You can take a soldier out of service, but you can't take the service out of the soldier."



'FIELD MARSHAL SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, DUKE OF WELLINGTON, AS AN OLD MAN SURVEYING THE BATTLEFIELD OF WATERLOO IN PRESENT-DAY BELGIUM' BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON, C.1840

In this imaginary scene, Wellington is shown as an old man standing on the site of his most famous victory. The picture was painted a quarter of a century after the battle and it shows changes in the topography such as the construction of the 'Lion's Mound' and a memorial. Unusually, and unlike more triumphal paintings, Wellington is depicted as world-weary. This is especially poignant as the Duke was said to have been traumatised by the battle.



East German police officers guarding the border zone, as seen through a hole in the Berlin Wall, October 1961

“THE FEELING WAS THAT IF WAR CAME, THE CAPTURE OF THE CITY WOULD BE QUICK AND MESSY – IT WOULD BECOME THE WORLD’S LARGEST POW CAMP”

SPECIAL FORCES BERLIN

PART I

GRABBING THE BEAR BY THE TAIL

Discover the improbable history of the American soldiers ready to fight behind enemy lines in World War III

WORDS JAMES STEJSKAL

The soldiers who began to trickle into the headquarters of the 6th Infantry Regiment, July 1956, looked different to the younger soldiers who saw them. They arrived at McNair Barracks, the old Telefunken factory complex in southwestern Berlin – the American Sector. The remaining sectors were occupied by the French, British, and to the east, the Soviets. Taken together they formed the four powers who had defeated Nazi Germany and its allies in World War II.

There were 40 men in all, led by US Army Major Edward Maltese, a veteran infantry officer with two combat jumps in Europe and one in Korea. The group formed what was called the Security Platoon. What was odd to the other members of the Regiment was that the 'Platoon' didn't seem to follow the Regiment's schedules. They came and went as they pleased, sometimes in uniform, sometimes in civilian clothing. They were also older and held higher ranks than in a normal platoon. But the infantrymen couldn't tell this, because many of the newcomers didn't wear their stripes. They would have been surprised to learn that the men were Special Forces (SF) troopers sent to Berlin for a very specific mission.

Within several months, the Platoon had disappeared from McNair Barracks and showed up several kilometres away in its own building on Andrews Barracks, the former home of Hitler's SS Panzer-Leibstandarte Division. Reinforced to 90 men, the unit was now known as 'Detachment A' or 'Det A' for short. The unit's classified name, used in Berlin Command's war plans, was simply Special Forces Berlin. It would remain in the city under one name or another until after the Wall came down in 1989.

The end of WWII changed the political face of Europe drastically. The Allied forces had defeated the mighty German military machine, but the alliance needed in wartime, of the United States, Britain, France with the Soviet

SF Berlin Team with US weapons after an exercise in West Germany. Two men standing at the left are observers from 10th SFG at Bad Tölz

"TO WEST BERLINERS, THEY WOULD BE FREEDOM FIGHTERS – TO THE ENEMY, THEY WOULD BE TERRORISTS"

Above: East German tanks assemble in front of the Friedrichstrasse train station, Berlin, with their guns pointed west, 1961

Union, was quickly disintegrating. Moscow had shown its true colours with its occupation and domination of countries in Eastern Europe. Military leaders and diplomats were wary of the USSR, a feeling reflected in George Kennan's 'Long Telegram' that prescribed a strategy of containment to deter Moscow's expansionism.

After the war, the US military had conventional forces and nuclear weapons at its disposal, but the army's special operations capacity had been disbanded, which limited possible responses to an attack. As the generals pondered their strategy to defend Western Europe from a Soviet onslaught, some argued that an unconventional approach was needed. Returning to the lessons learned from the operations of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Europe, Special Forces was created in 1952 with the mission "to infiltrate by land, sea or air, deep into enemy-occupied territory and organise the resistance/guerrilla potential to conduct Special Forces operations, with emphasis on guerrilla warfare." Its first mission was to train and run guerrilla forces in North Korea in late 1952.

On the other side of the world, the June 1953 workers uprising in East Berlin led the Pentagon to accelerate the deployment of the 10th Special Forces Group to Bad Tölz, Germany. Their mission showed how intent planners were to deter the Soviet aggression. In the event of war, they were to conduct partisan warfare behind enemy lines.

The situation in West Berlin was quite different. Almost everyone saw Berlin Command as a show-place with little offensive or defensive capability. The approx. 10,000 Allied troops were surrounded by nearly 1 million East German and Soviet troops, some just kilometres away from each other. The feeling was that if war came, the capture of the city would be quick and messy – it would become the world's largest POW camp.

In 1955, the US Commander of Berlin had another idea. What if he could employ Special Forces to help defend the city? The US Army Europe Commander agreed but took it a step further; a Special Forces Detachment would be stationed there to assist the Berlin Brigade, but more importantly, they would be a stay-behind force trained to infiltrate behind the lines and wreak havoc in the enemy's rear areas. They would have all the weapons, explosives and communications gear needed to fight on their own. To slow down the Soviet advance, they would destroy critical infrastructure like railway bridges, communications terminals, fuel dumps, as well as command and control facilities. It was a tall order, but exactly the kind of mission Special Forces were created for.

However, while the Special Forces units in West Germany and the United States could wear their uniforms, the men of Det A would not. They needed to blend in with their German neighbours, dress and act like them, even eat like them. They had to speak German or another useful language. Their skill set was different too. Along with mastering all the 'ungentlemanly arts' of a Special Forces trooper, they had to become masters of clandestine unconventional warfare and intelligence tradecraft – the techniques that

American soldiers watch as workers, heavily guarded by East German security forces, build a massive stone barricade at the Friedrichstrasse crossing point in East Berlin, 1961

BERLIN c.1956

THE GERMAN CAPITAL WAS SEPARATED INTO FOUR ZONES OF OCCUPATION: THE AMERICAN, BRITISH, FRENCH, AND SOVIET SECTORS

Tempelhof Airfield was a hub of activity during the Cold War and became West Berlin's primary airport

NEUENDORF
Railway junction – sabotage target to harass Warsaw Pact troop movements.

TEMPELHOF AIRFIELD
Centre of all US air operations and headquarters for the USAF in Berlin

EAST GERMAN NATIONAL COMMAND BUNKER NEAR WERNEUCHEN
Sabotage target: Underground command facility for the East German Ministry of National Defense

ROOSEVELT BARRACKS
Home to Physical Security Support Element (1984-1990) and the Local National Guard Battalion.

MCNAIR BARRACKS
Home to the 6th Infantry Regiment of Berlin Command, later known as Berlin Brigade.

ANDREWS BARRACKS
Home to USAB's support battalion, the Army Security Agency, and Detachment A (1956-1984).

WILHELMSHORST
Railway junction – sabotage target to harass Warsaw Pact troop movements.

SOVIET FORCES GERMANY COMMAND AT ZOSSEN-WÜNSDORF
Sabotage target: Soviet Wartime Command Centre – Codename RANET.

Zossen-Wünsdorf
Soviet Forces Germany Headquarters

"THEY WOULD DESTROY CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE LIKE RAILWAY BRIDGES, COMMUNICATIONS TERMINALS, FUEL DUMPS, AS WELL AS COMMAND AND CONTROL FACILITIES"

A map of divided Berlin showing the Aussenring railway line and targets

OPERATION SOLTAU

HONING INFILTRATION SKILLS...

In 1958, Detachment A was tasked to test the security of a British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) unit by attempting to infiltrate the headquarters of a brigade undergoing a field evaluation. Team Two was given the mission; they would parachute in and contact a 'guerrilla force' on the ground.

The team flew from Berlin and jumped at night onto a drop zone 20 kilometres from the British camp in West Germany. Two SAS troopers, role-playing as guerrillas, met them and led the team through the night to a barn where they would make preparations.

The next night, they moved closer. Walking five minutes, stopping another five to listen for the enemy, they slowly approached the camp. From observation points, the team watched the camp to pinpoint key locations. The next night, half the men moved out to infiltrate the target while the rest covered them.

Undiscovered by sentries on their way in, two men approached the commander's tent and listened. Satisfied he was asleep, one man slowly crawled under the flap. Inside, he placed a calling card next to the commander's head and quietly backed out.

In the meantime, small charges were set near the communications and operations centres. On cue, the explosives were blown, covering the men's escape. Quickly moving off on a meandering route to mislead trackers, they headed off to a new bed-down site.

The next day, the team was called in for a 'discussion'. An embarrassed commander declared, "You chaps gave us quite a start last evening." He laid the calling card on the table, its inscription "YOU ARE DEAD" face up, and acknowledged he was indeed dead. After a light-hearted exchange of security ideas the team escaped once more. There can be no doubt the colonel received a less humorous critique from above.

***Above:** Captain Klys makes power as Sergeant Webber sends message during a typical field exercise. Their insignia is from 10th SFG in Bad Tölz (photo: Adam Klys)*

Sergeants Ruhland and 'Z' teach the finer points of an explosive shaped charge useful for opening safes and destroying engines or power transformers (photo: HD Halterman)

Gerald 'Stan' Stanford, radio operator and unit photographer, with his Rolliflex camera downtown circa 1958 (photo: J Wilde)

Detachment A airborne training for a daylight jump from a C-119 in southern Germany (photo: J Wilde)

would enable them to accomplish their mission in the face of a numerically superior enemy and hopefully survive. To West Berliners, they would be freedom fighters – to the enemy, they would be terrorists.

Putting the unit together

Once in Berlin, the first thing that the Det A men had to do was recover their personal automobiles from the American Military Police (MP) who had driven them across East Germany. In the early years, the SF troopers were not allowed to drive the Autobahn through the Communist zone because they all held top secret clearances – the army was afraid they would be kidnapped. Unfortunately, the MP seemed to think the cars would be theirs. Once that misunderstanding was cleared up and the cars 'physically' restored to their owners (resulting in years of acrimony, for which the MP never got satisfaction), the work of setting up the unit began.

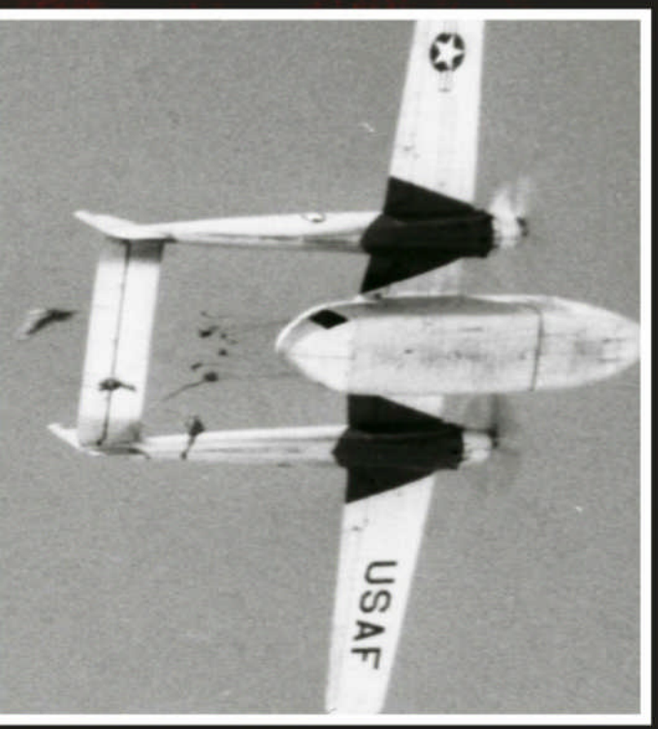
The unit was organised in six so-called 'A Team' or Operational Detachment Alpha, the kernel of any Special Forces unit. Each team consisted of 11 men (versus the 12 of other SF units); a captain as team leader, a master sergeant as team sergeant and nine other men trained in operations and intelligence, weapons, communications, demolitions and medical specialities. Each was cross-trained in at least one other speciality, plus each had to master sending and receiving at least 10-15 words per minute in Morse Code and be able to operate the radios. The commander had been promoted to lieutenant colonel. He was assisted by a major as his executive officer, a captain as the operations officer and an enlisted staff to plan and co-ordinate training and operations.

Training was intensive. Physically, the men worked out individually, occasionally coming together for a group run, basketball game or a football match. Hours were devoted to surreptitious entry techniques, sabotage and intelligence tradecraft, such as clandestine communications and secret writing. Experts from other government agencies were brought in to teach the esoteric subjects of non-technical communications (dead letter drops, personal meetings, brush passes, etc.) and surveillance operations, which were followed by days of street work and report writing for future use.

For their secondary mission of strategic reconnaissance, the men had to know the uniforms, equipment and order of battle of the Soviet and East German military intimately. They familiarised with Soviet weapons and, although they would wear civilian clothes initially, they might switch to the enemy's uniforms to camouflage themselves once in their operational area. They knew and accepted the fact that capture would most likely mean death.

It was harder to train for war in Berlin. Although small field exercises and weapons training could be conducted in the city's forests and on the military's ranges, anything more complex had to be done in West Germany. The unit would often deploy two or three teams to the 'Zone' to participate in major exercises. The rest of the unit would stay in Berlin just in

"THEY FAMILIARISED WITH SOVIET WEAPONS AND, ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD WEAR CIVILIAN CLOTHES INITIALLY, THEY MIGHT SWITCH TO THE ENEMY'S UNIFORMS TO CAMOUFLAGE THEMSELVES ONCE IN THEIR OPERATIONAL AREA"



RS-6 High Frequency Radio Set used by OSS, CIA, and SF Berlin (Richard Brisson, collector, www.campx.ca)

case the 'balloon went up', as going to war was colloquially known.

The unit's airborne operations were conducted in southern Germany. The men would fly out of Tempelhof Airport on a C-119 or C-124 and rig in flight or at Neubiberg or Fürstenfeldbruck airfields for their jump and return the same day. They came to call themselves 'the Munich for Lunch Bunch'.

In reality, the detachment had little operational use for its airborne status – the men were already behind the lines. Walking and sloshing through sewers and swimming across lakes and canals would be the better, more survivable routes to get into the East. That said, keeping everyone on 'Jump' status was easier than retraining them. Besides, a mission might come up that would require the skill.

Sometimes, the flights were a bit more eventful than others. On one, a 'leg' (non-airborne) captain from the Berlin Brigade was put on the only flight leaving Berlin because he needed to get home to his family. It just happened to be a Detachment jump flight, but no one thought to mention it to him. When the other 'passengers' began to pull their parachutes off a covered pallet and suit up for the jump, he began to panic. Thinking that there was an in-flight emergency, the captain went to the jumpmaster and asked for a parachute. The jumpmaster jokingly told him he was out of luck – there weren't enough parachutes to go around.

Feeling sorry for the man, the Air Force loadmaster told the anxious captain not to worry, the aeroplane was not in danger. He was sent to sit in a corner and stay out of the way while the jumpmaster went down the checklist for the drop. The aircraft slowed to jump speed and the crew opened the doors. The wind howled through the interior – the turbulence and the roar of the engines compelled the hapless officer to squeeze even tighter into his corner. The green light came on and the paratroopers were gone, out the door and into space. The aircrew pulled the static lines back into the cabin and buttoned up the aircraft. A relative quiet returned to the cabin when the doors slammed shut. The captain found himself completely alone with nothing to do but contemplate what he had just witnessed. When the aircraft landed, the crew told him to forget what he had just seen.

1958: Preparing for war

The Soviets continued to consolidate their control over Eastern Europe even after the death of Josef Stalin. The Polish Poznan Uprising and Hungarian Revolution left western military planners and politicians on edge. Then Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev called for a separate peace with East Germany that would have forced the Allies to pull out of Berlin, further exacerbating tensions between the two camps.

The West refused to accede to Khrushchev's demands and, as the political climate heated

"WHEN THE AIRCRAFT LANDED, THE CREW TOLD HIM TO FORGET WHAT HE HAD JUST SEEN"

up, SF Berlin prepared for their clandestine war. Each team had a specific area of responsibility within the city and without. Two teams would move north into the French sector and then cross the border into East Germany when conditions were right. Two teams would do the same in the south in the American sector. The last two would remain in the city to make life difficult for the occupiers, when and if they succeeded in capturing West Berlin.

The teams had the benefit of the best intelligence available on their targets and operational area. Plus, they could physically observe everything they needed to know just by visiting. Team rooms were strewn with maps, plans and scale models not only of their targets, but also the border itself. 'Cross over'

Detachment A Challenge Coin – Designed by Julius Farago. Never carried on operations, but used for coin checks

One of the most famous East German deserters, a guard named Conrad Schumann, leaps over the east-west barrier in Berlin 1961

"THEY WERE TOLD THAT THEY HAD JUST ESCAPED FROM A POW CAMP AND NOW HAD TO MAKE THEIR WAY TO BAD TÖLZ, 850 KILOMETRES TO THE SOUTH, BY ANY MEANS AND WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT"

sites were chosen based on East German security and the likelihood of being able to disappear into the countryside once across the lightly defended border. That said, the idea was to cross without being detected.

Exercises were conducted to test the team's abilities not only to live in the city, but to communicate and operate clandestinely. Being arrested by the Polizei meant failure.

Each man would disappear into the city and communicate with his team-mates by dead-letter drop or infrequent personal meetings. The team's radio operators would maintain contact with the unit headquarters using a concealable RS-6 high frequency radio from a safe-house. The communicators were the most vulnerable to compromise as the Germans and Allied authorities used radio direction finding (RDF) teams to locate the signals of suspected communist agents in the West. All radio messages had to be encrypted and short. As soon as a transmission was completed, the operator had to pack up and move.

During one test, Frank, a team communicator went to his 'safehouse' – in this case a very cheap hotel in the Kreuzberg district – to send a situation report. After hanging the antenna in his room, he decided to plug the power supply directly into the hotel's electricity rather than waste precious battery power. He encrypted the message and destroyed the clear text before he even came to the hotel to lessen the chance of compromise should he be 'captured'.

Frank tapped out the message – it took only minutes to send, but that was enough to give the 'enemy' a chance to lock on to the signal. He quickly packed up the equipment and opened the door to leave, only to find all the lights in the hotel had gone out. The radio's power supply had blown the circuit breakers. This was another good reason to check out early and, having already paid the bill, he slipped out a side exit.

Within minutes of his departure, an RDF unit came through the streets of the neighbourhood looking for the signal. It was a close call, but, as they say, good training.

Working in the city was both nerve-wracking and exhilarating. The unit was on constant alert status. If called up, the men had to assemble and be ready to move out and go to war within two hours, 24 hours a day. Only when a team was training in West Germany or the States were they free of that requirement, but even then they could be called back in short order.

A major concern for the unit was that a surprise attack could target the unit's headquarters and cut the men off from their equipment, so measures were taken to prevent that. Extra weapons and ammunition, explosives, medical and communications gear were hidden in cache sites around the city. Each team had a number of sites assigned for their use. All were hidden in locations that were carefully recorded and camouflaged so that only the teams could find them. In the history of the unit, a cache was never compromised.

Living like a German in Berlin, preparing to destroy targets or kill enemy generals was one thing – how to survive once the mission was accomplished or a soldier was cut off from his team was another.

Escape and evasion was an aspect of the complete training that made up the SF Berlin soldier's routine. The second commander, Lieutenant Colonel Roman T Piernick, devised what was perhaps the ultimate test.

Five 'volunteers' were taken by truck to a spot in northern West Germany. They were dropped off in the countryside wearing sterile army uniforms with no money and no identification. They were told that they had just escaped from a POW camp and now had to make their way to Bad Tölz, 850 kilometres to the south, by any means and without getting caught. To make things interesting, every policeman along the route was alerted and a bounty was offered for the 'escapees' capture.

With no help, the men separated and headed out. By the end of the first night, all managed to acquire civilian clothing and shed their uniforms to blend in with the German population. One evader did manual labour to earn some money before continuing his travel. Another caught a ride with some college students who were on holiday in their VW microbus; the back of a beer delivery truck provided transport for a third. Within ten days, all five made it through the gauntlet and arrived at Flint Kaserne, home base for the 10th SFG, outside Bad Tölz where they were debriefed on their experiences. A lot of German Polizei went home disappointed they had missed out on the reward.

1961: A drip becomes a flood

Berlin was the focal point of contention between the East and the West. It symbolised the differences between two systems – a Communist dictatorship on one side and a Capitalist democracy on the other – and inevitably, it became an escape route.

East Germans tired of oppression and their poor economy made quick their escape to West Berlin to gain their freedom. Berlin's inner city border was the only place where they could cross without seeking permission from the authorities. From the end of WWII up until around 1961, more than 3 million East Germans emigrated to the West, most escaping through West Berlin. The leaders of East Germany and the Soviet Union knew they had to plug the leak that was draining the country of valuable labour. Their decision would result in the 'Anti-Fascist Protective Wall'.

The East German workers soon became shielded on all sides by patrols of armed guards and huge tanks, as they laid out barbed wire that would cordon off the Soviet-occupied Eastern Sector from the Allied Western Sector of Berlin.

Two SF Berlin soldiers watched the frenzied construction from the opposite side of the Spree River. From their vantage point, the two men contemplated more than just how the new barrier would keep people from escaping the oppression of East Germany. They were thinking about their mission.

The fences that marked the border around Berlin were one thing – those that made crossing from West Berlin into the East German countryside a challenge – but they were easily overcome. However, the formidable concrete block structure that was currently going up in front of them would effectively seal the inner city border between West and East Berlin. It would cut off workers from their jobs, separate families and make sure that East German citizens could not simply walk over into the sanctuary that West Berlin offered them.

For the two soldiers dressed in civilian clothing, however, the new wall posed a different problem.

"Things are about to get difficult," said one. "We're going to need some Houdini tricks to get over that."

"Na, ja," the other agreed. "but I'm hungry. We should get a schnitzel or something."

The war plan would wait. Now it was time to feed body and soul.

TO BE CONTINUED...

PART 2 IN **HISTORY OF WAR** ISSUE 42, ON SALE 18 MAY

***Above:** Alles Wurst! Operations sometimes required getting your meals on the run (photo: J Wilde)*

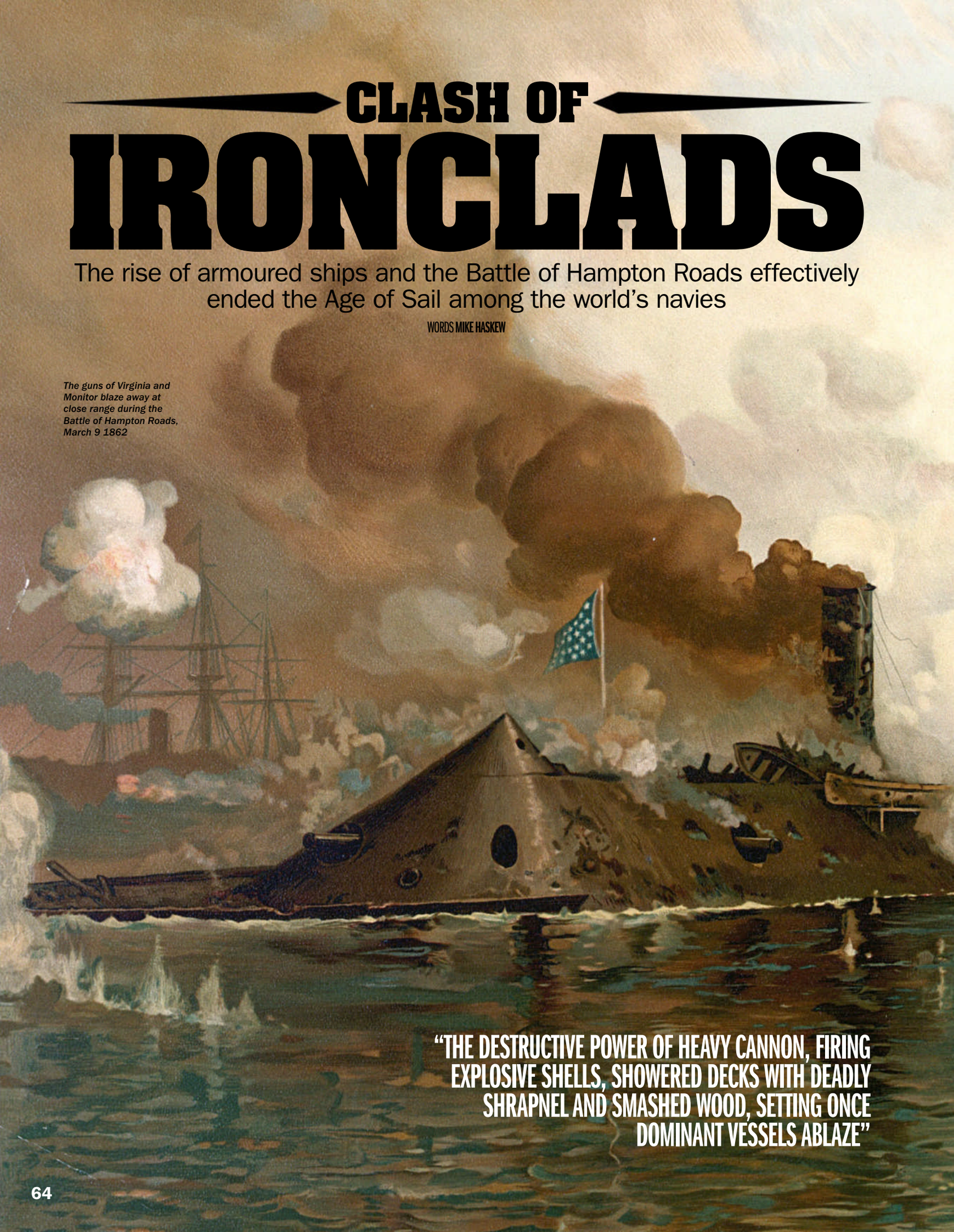
FURTHER READING

- **US ARMY SPECIAL WARFARE: ITS ORIGINS**
  NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1982
  BY ARTHUR H JR PADDOCK
- **SPECIAL FORCES BERLIN: CLANDESTINE COLD WAR OPERATIONS OF THE US ARMY'S ELITE, 1956-1990**
  CASEMATE, OXFORD 2017
  BY JAMES STEJSKAL

CLASH OF IRONCLADS

The rise of armoured ships and the Battle of Hampton Roads effectively ended the Age of Sail among the world's navies

WORDS MIKE HASKEW



The guns of Virginia and Monitor blaze away at close range during the Battle of Hampton Roads, March 9 1862

"THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF HEAVY CANNON, FIRING EXPLOSIVE SHELLS, SHOWERED DECKS WITH DEADLY SHRAPNEL AND SMASHED WOOD, SETTING ONCE DOMINANT VESSELS ABLAZE"

The early morning of 8 March, 1862, passed quietly. Sailors' laundry hung from the masts and rigging of the Union warships tasked with blockade duty in Hampton Roads that Saturday.

The American Civil War was in its second year, and a vital component of the Union grand strategy, later known as the Anaconda Plan, was to blockade Confederate ports, strangling the lifeline of war materiel and other goods that might otherwise sustain the rebellion. Carrying out their assignment at Hampton Roads, where the James, Elizabeth and Nansemond Rivers empty into Chesapeake Bay and eventually the Atlantic Ocean, five Union warships lay at anchor, patiently waiting.

A few minutes after Noon, a lookout aboard the 52-gun frigate USS Congress saw something strange on the horizon. Belching smoke from its funnel, a large, menacing warship was chugging slowly toward the Union flotilla. Reports had indicated for some time that the Confederates were building an ironclad at nearby Gosport Navy Yard. The sailor turned to a shipmate and said, "I wish you would take the glass and have a look over there sir. I believe that thing is a comin' down at last."

Iron usurps sail

For centuries, the billowing sails of ships of the line projected naval power across the globe, firing broadsides in decisive battles that determined the fates of nations. By the 19th century, however, technology had begun to render these wooden vessels obsolete. The destructive power of heavy cannon, firing explosive shells, showered decks with deadly shrapnel and smashed wood, setting once dominant vessels ablaze.

The solution, it seemed, lay in the application of defensive armour that would offer protection against heavy-calibre shells. With the advent of the steam engine and the screw propeller, ships capable of bearing the additional weight of iron and steel plating were designed and built, and the fighting ship was freed from enslavement to the prevailing winds at sea.

Although early ironclads retained masts and rigging in the event they were necessary, an ironclad was defined as a steam-driven warship with iron or steel plating for protection and guns capable of firing explosive shells in addition to solid shot. By the 1830s, cannon of increasingly heavier calibre, such as the British 68-pounder, were becoming more common. The 206mm 68-pounder was named for the weight of the projectile it fired, while the 32-pounder gun often remained the heaviest weapon that wooden sailing ships could support.

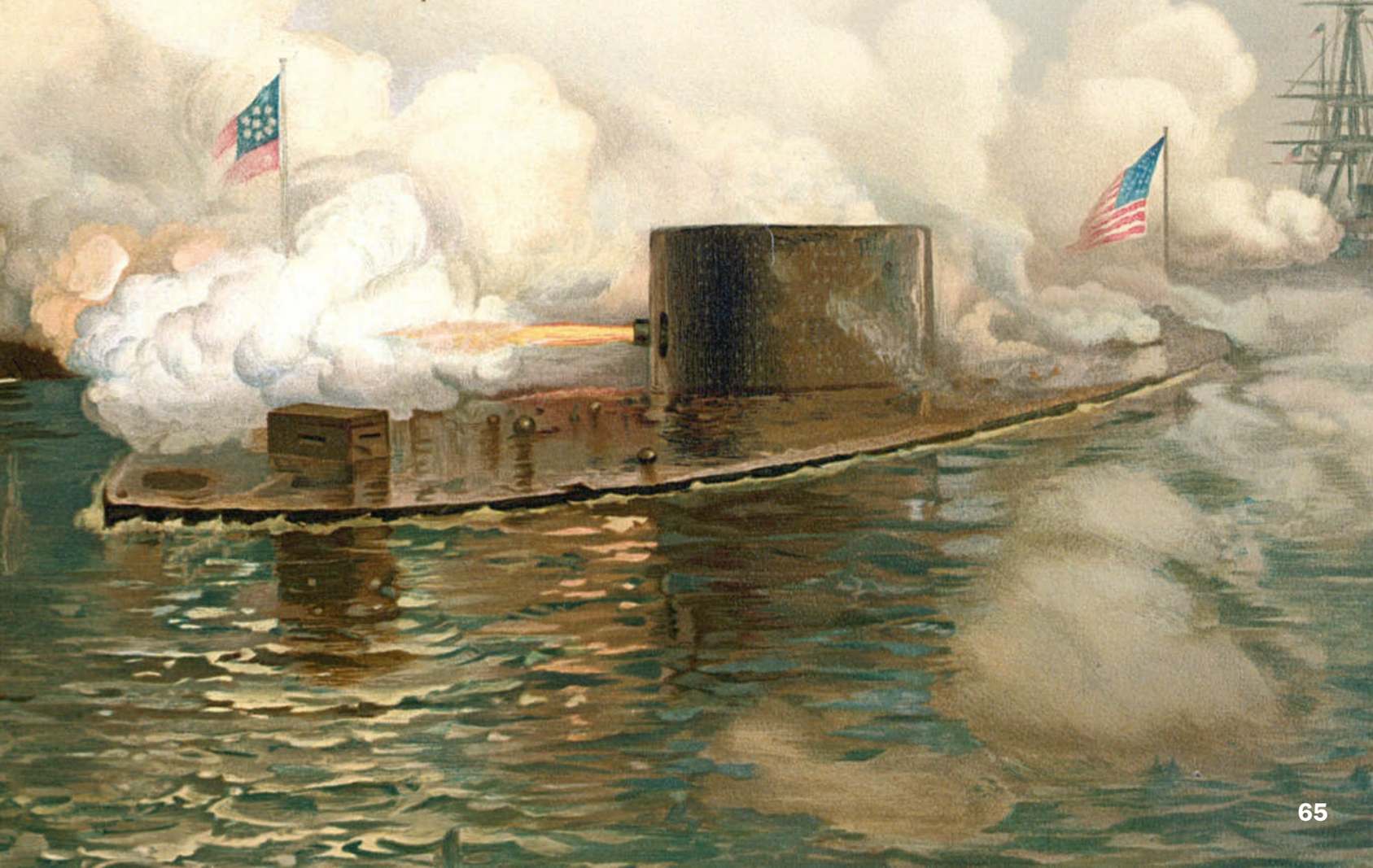
The earliest innovation that led to the development of the ironclad was the steam engine, which revolutionised maritime propulsion; initially powering paddlewheel vessels and then giving way to the screw-driven ironclads that emerged in the mid-19th century. The steam engine enabled warships to manoeuvre both strategically and tactically during a naval engagement, regardless of the prevailing winds. Its advantages over sail were quickly realised, so Britain and France embarked on rival building programs – incorporating steam-powered warships as early as the 1840s.

The introduction of iron plating that covered an internal wooden framework was concurrent with the introduction of the steam engine, and by the Crimean War (1853-1856) the British and French navies had collaborated on the construction and deployment of armoured floating batteries. These slow, ponderous vessels were only capable of moving short distances under their own power. Nevertheless, the success of the floating batteries in support of wooden ships, during the bombardment of Russian fortifications, convinced the British, French and other major naval powers that the further development of armoured warships had merit.

Naval arms evolution

British shipbuilding capacity enabled the Royal Navy to maintain a quantitative advantage over the rival French in steam-powered warships during the 1850s. However, French shipbuilders sought a method of redressing the imbalance. Naval architect Henri Dupuy de Lôme suggested the development of the world's first oceangoing ironclad warship.

In 1859, the 36-gun ironclad Gloire was launched at the port of Toulon. The warship was constructed with a wooden hull 17 centimetres thick and covered in 12-centimetre thick iron plating that overlapped. Before its installation, this combination of iron and timber was tested against the strongest naval guns then in use. Prior to the introduction of Gloire, ironclad warships had operated in coastal waters or traversed only short distances under their own power. Constructed as an oceangoing vessel, Gloire was a game-changer. The steam-powered



ironclad was capable of a top speed of 13 knots, and its range extended a full 4,000 kilometres, while maintaining an average speed of eight knots. Masts and rigging were installed as a secondary source of propulsion.

Confronted with the prospect that the French Navy might project ironclad muscle across the globe, the world's major naval powers had no choice but to respond. Suddenly, the British Admiralty was unable to take comfort in its advantage of wooden-hulled steam warships.

Within 13 months, the British response to Gloire was revealed. The 40-gun armoured frigate HMS Warrior was launched by the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company in Blackwall, London in December 1860. Warrior's hull was constructed of iron with armour 11.4 centimetres thick, and costly alterations were made to its design throughout the construction period, which nearly bankrupted the builder. Warrior's range extended to 3,900 kilometres at a sustained speed of 11 knots, while its steam engine delivered a top speed of 14 knots. Masts and sails remained as well.

Designed by Isaac Watts, chief constructor of the Royal Navy, and engineer Thomas Lloyd, Warrior was built with the proven hull design of prior Royal Navy frigates. The Warrior design included a citadel or box-like structure amidships that protected most of the ship's armament and command positions. Operationally, its role differed from that of Gloire, which had been conceived to serve as a ship of the line. Rather than slugging it out with powerful broadsides, Warrior and other warships of her class were built as frigates with clipper bows, using speed to dictate the circumstances of a naval confrontation to their own advantage.

"THE CIVIL WAR WAS DESTINED TO BECOME THE PROVING GROUND FOR THE IRONCLAD AS A WEAPON"

Other European nations watched with great interest as the British and French navies modernised. By the early 1860s, at least five other countries had committed to the development of ironclad warships. Soon after the completion of Gloire, the French launched a second ironclad, Couronne. The Royal Navy accepted its second oceangoing ironclad, HMS Black Prince, into service in May 1862. By the end of that year, the British and French navies each had commissioned 16 ironclad warships.

American ironclads

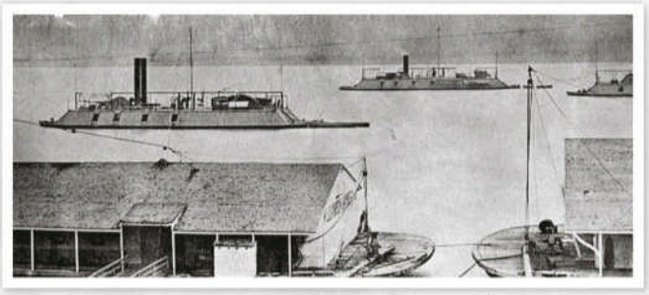
Although the United States Navy had commissioned its first iron-hulled vessel, the Great Lakes steamer USS Michigan, in 1843, only the outbreak of the Civil War brought construction of an ironclad fleet to the forefront of naval thought – and at the time it was a necessity. While the majority of American naval vessels had remained with the Union, undoubtedly the Confederacy would embark on a campaign to build ironclads or purchase them from other countries. The Civil War was destined to become the proving ground for the ironclad as a weapon.

The first purpose-built ironclad warships of the US Navy were not completed until after the war had begun, and these were intended for the fight to gain control of the Mississippi River. Captain James B Eads, an industrialist and inventor in St Louis, Missouri, proposed the construction of shallow-draft ironclad gunboats that could bombard Confederate fortifications, defeat wooden-hulled rebel warships and support land campaigns.

By late 1861, Eads had been authorised to build seven City-class ironclad gunboats from the keel up at his shipworks in Carondelet, Missouri, on the banks of the Mississippi. The gunboats were constructed rapidly as Eads utilised 4,000 workers around the clock, seven days a week. Supporting the offensives against Forts Henry and Donelson, Island No 10 and the key city of Vicksburg, the gunboats played prominent roles. During the naval Battle of Memphis in June 1862, the gunboats were instrumental in a decisive victory against Confederate forces that resulted in the surrender of the city.

The lead ship of Eads's City-class was the USS Cairo, which was commissioned in January 1862. With a draft of only 1.8 metres, Cairo weighed 512 tons with a length of 53 metres, a beam of nearly 16 metres and a top speed of only four knots. Its armour protection ranged from 1.8 to nearly nine centimetres. Heavily armed, Cairo carried a trio of 8-inch (203mm) smoothbore cannon along with as many as 11 rifled guns ranging from 12- to 42-pounders. Despite this impressive loadout, Cairo was sunk by a floating mine in October 1862.

***Above:** In 1860, the Royal Navy unveiled HMS Warrior, an ironclad frigate that provided a qualitative edge for Britain in naval technology*



***Above:** Shallow draft ironclads of the US Navy lie of the Mississippi River port of Cairo, Illinois, during the Civil War*

***Right:** The French ship Gloire was launched in 1859 and was among the first ironclads in the world*

THE 'FLOATING CHEESE BOX'

JOHN ERICSSON'S IRONCLAD MONITOR INCORPORATED NUMEROUS INNOVATIONS IN WARSHIP DESIGN, INCLUDING MORE THAN 40 INVENTIONS THAT WERE ELIGIBLE FOR PATENT

John Ericsson was a genius, whose engineering prowess had contributed to the invention of the screw propeller and the adaptation of the steam engine for use aboard ships. Despite this, the prospects for the success of his proposed ironclad, Monitor, were initially dim.

Ericsson's fortunes changed when Cornelius Bushnell carried his plans and a scale model of Monitor directly to President Abraham Lincoln, initially bypassing the adversarial Ironclad Board. With Lincoln's support, the project, which some had dubbed Ericsson's folly, would take shape after all.

Monitor was a marvel of ingenuity. While the lower hull was in a much more traditional shape, the freeboard distance from the raft-like upper hull to the waterline only measured about two feet, contributing to its shallow draft of just 3.2 metres, which Ericsson believed ideal for operations along the Confederate coastline. He also designed Monitor's single-cylinder steam engine, which generated a top speed of six knots, adequate for coastal operations.

Constructed with 20 centimetres of layered armour, Monitor's rotating turret was the forerunner of the modern naval turret, influencing warship design for the next century. Roughly 20 feet in diameter and nine feet high, it was powered by two small engines controlling a complex of gears and completed a rotation in just less than 23 seconds.

Monitor was less than 55 metres long, about two-thirds the length of its adversary CSS Virginia. With a beam of roughly 12.5 meters, the ironclad was relatively compact. Its low silhouette presented a minimal target for enemy warships and shore batteries. Well protected at the waterline, Monitor's armoured belt thickness ranged from 7.6 to 12.7 centimetres, while the iron skin covering its turret was 20cm thick. Its deck armour measured 2.5cm thick, and nearly 23cm of riveted iron plating protected the pilothouse.

"CONSTRUCTED WITH 20CM OF LAYERED ARMOUR, MONITOR'S ROTATING TURRET WAS THE FORERUNNER OF THE MODERN NAVAL TURRET, INFLUENCING WARSHIP DESIGN FOR THE NEXT CENTURY"

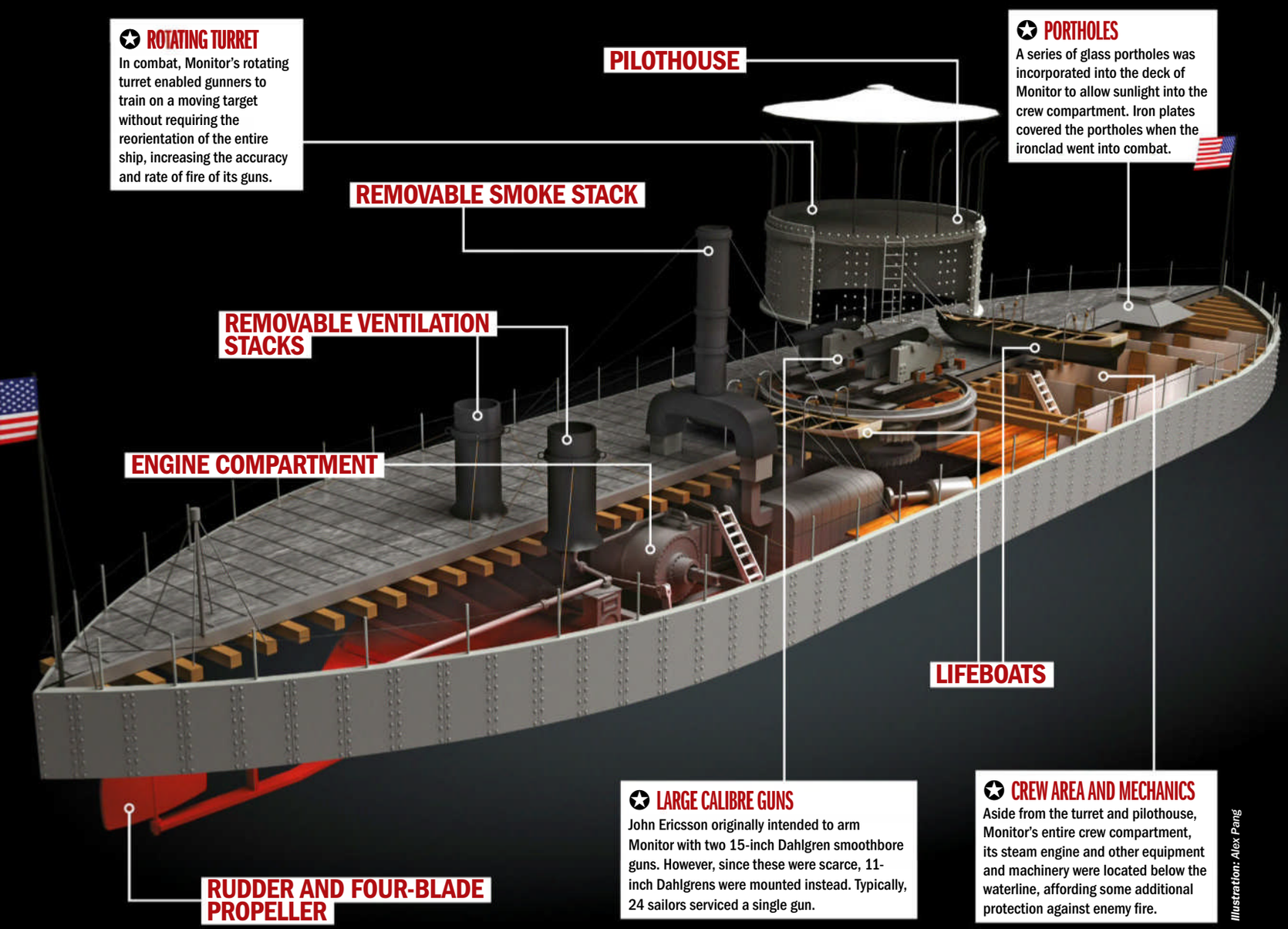
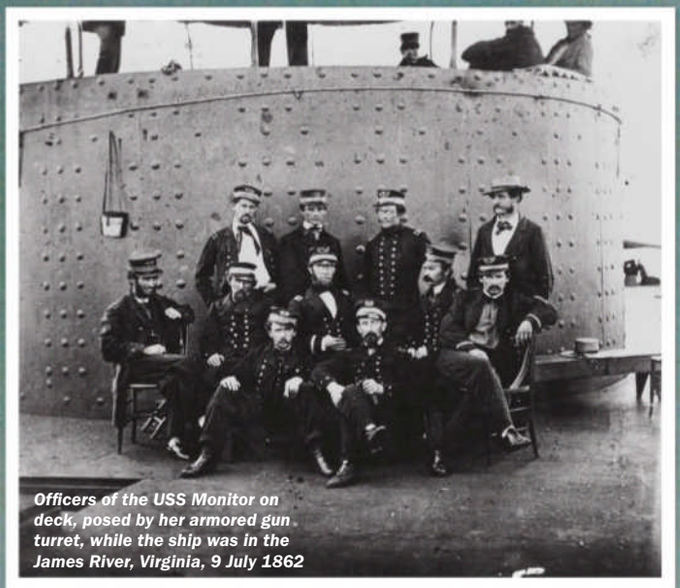
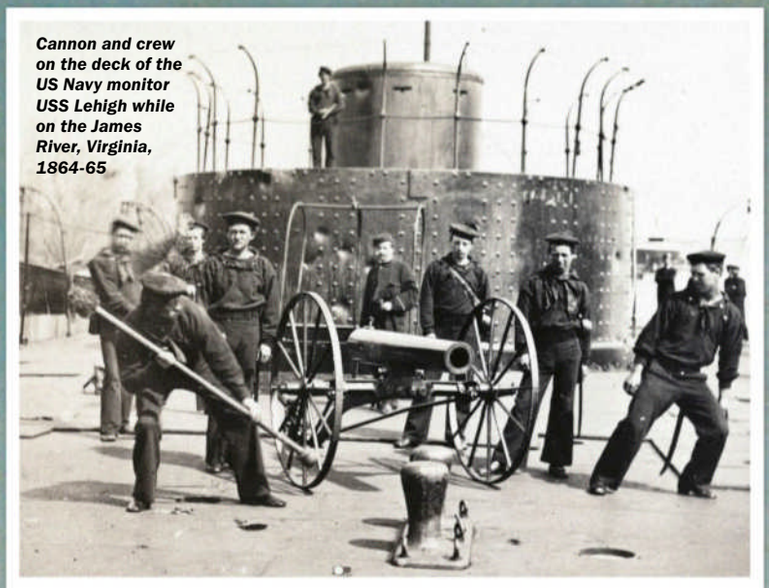


Illustration: Alex Pang



Officers of the USS Monitor on deck, posed by her armored gun turret, while the ship was in the James River, Virginia, 9 July 1862



Cannon and crew on the deck of the US Navy monitor USS Lehigh while on the James River, Virginia, 1864-65

The first ironclad built for the Confederate Navy was the CSS Manassas, converted from the captured steam icebreaker Enoch Train at Algiers, Louisiana, near New Orleans. The steam powered Manassas, armed with a single cannon and an iron ram, was the first vessel of its kind to engage enemy warships during a raid up the Mississippi River from New Orleans in October 1861, which came to be known as the Battle of the Head of Passes.

Birth of CSS Virginia

When Union forces abandoned the Gosport Navy Yard in the spring of 1861, several ships that could not be removed were put to the torch. One of these, the steam frigate USS Merrimack, burned to the waterline. However, the remainder of the lower hull and its steam powerplant were relatively undamaged.

The Secretary of the Confederate navy, Stephen Mallory, advocated the building and acquisition of ironclad warships to counter the Union naval superiority, defend key ports and possibly even break the Union blockade. Mallory authorised the conversion of the Merrimack to an ironclad. This was completed nine months later, on 7 March 1862, just a day before the Battle of Hampton Roads began.

Lieutenants John M Brooke and John L Porter and William P Williamson, chief engineer of the Confederate Navy, supervised the redesign and construction of the ironclad, which was renamed CSS Virginia. A casemated, armoured gunboat, Virginia was nearly 84 metres long with a beam of 15.6 metres, draft of 6.4 metres and weight of approximately 4,000 tons. Iron plating from 2.5 to 10 centimetres protected the vessel. Armament included a pair of 12-pounder howitzers, half a dozen 229mm smoothbore Dahlgren cannon and four rifled guns, two of 178mm and two of 160mm. A menacing iron ram was fitted to its bow. Powered by a pair of steam engines, Virginia was capable of a top speed of only six knots.

The making of monitor

During a joint session of the US Congress held 4 July 1861, a report was read detailing the construction of a Confederate ironclad warship that might threaten the supremacy of the Union Navy and even the security of northern cities on the Potomac River, including Washington, DC.

Committed to imposing its blockade of Confederate ports, the US Navy was feverishly constructing 47 wooden warships, however, the news of the rebel ironclad was alarming. Within weeks, Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles had requested proposals for armoured warship designs, an 'Ironclad Board' of naval officers had been organised to judge the entries and $1.5 million had been appropriated for the construction of the new vessels.

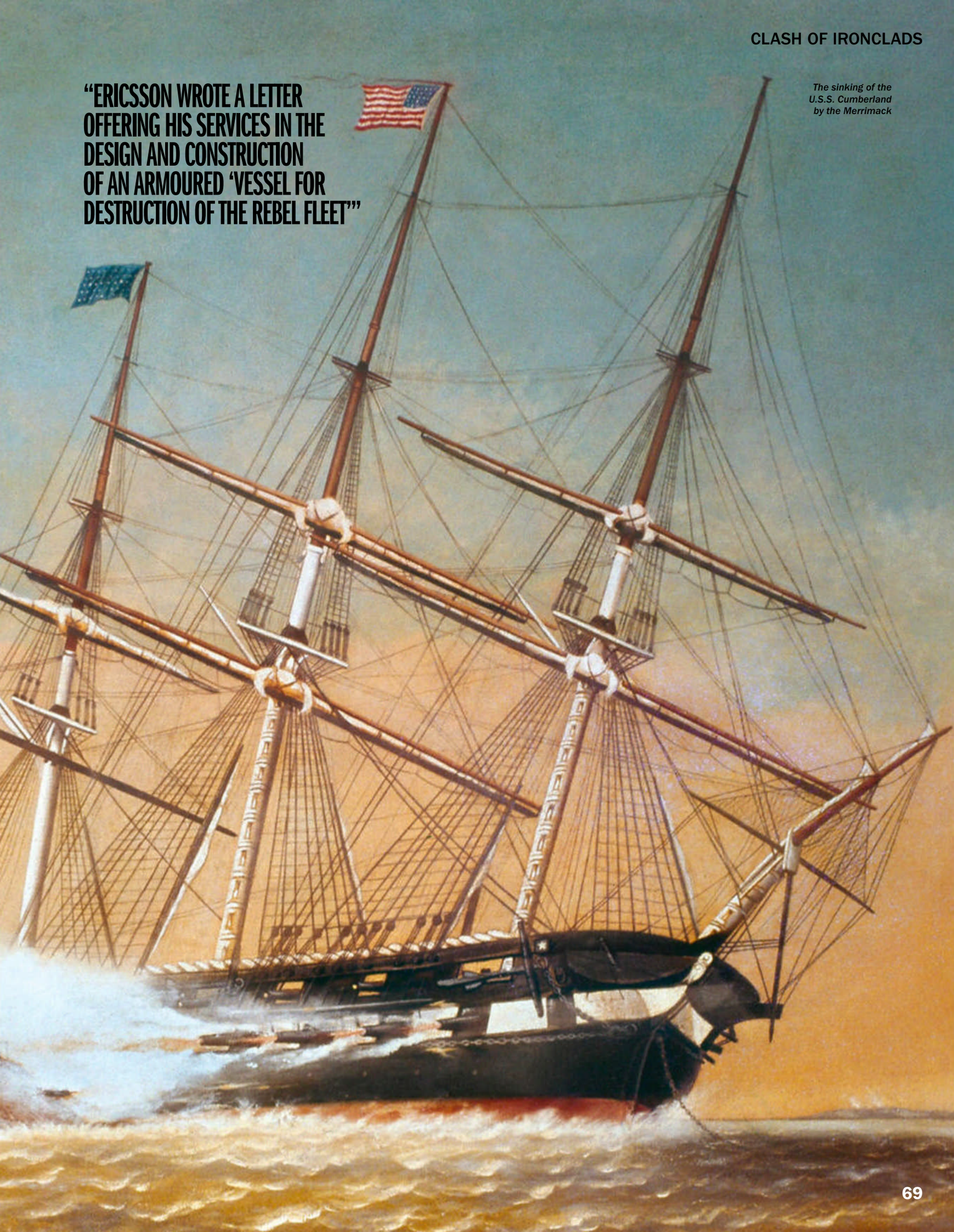
In August, Swedish-born inventor and engineer John Ericsson wrote a letter directly to President Abraham Lincoln offering his services in the design and construction of an armoured, "…vessel for destruction of the rebel fleet at Norfolk and for scouring the Southern rivers and inlets of all craft protected by rebel batteries." The letter was intercepted before it reached Lincoln, and naval officers rejected Ericsson's offer out of hand.

When the Ironclad Board met the following month, two contracts were approved for broadside ironclads with armour fastened to their wooden hulls. These were christened USS Galena and USS New Ironsides. Cornelius Bushnell, one of the designers of Galena, was concerned about his ship's stability and consulted with Ericsson. During their meeting, Bushnell was asked by Ericsson to take a look at his own ironclad design, a radical departure from more conventional schemes.

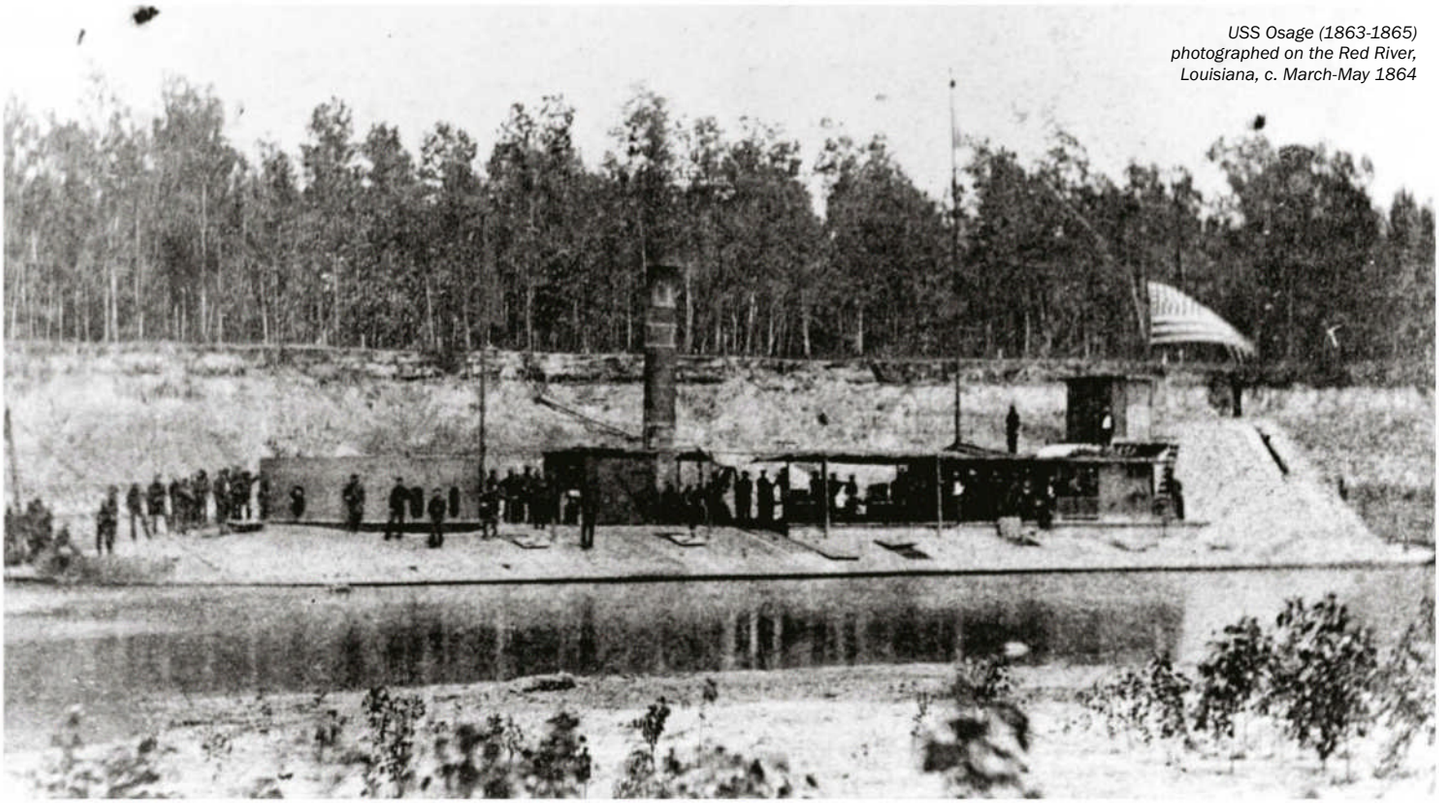
Ericsson's design was simple enough, a floating raft with a single, round turret at its centre and a small pilothouse towards the front of the vessel. Bushnell was intrigued and took the plans to Secretary Welles. After reviewing the plans, President

"THE STEAM POWERED MANASSAS, ARMED WITH A SINGLE CANNON AND AN IRON RAM AFFIXED TO ITS BOW, WAS THE FIRST VESSEL OF ITS KIND TO ENGAGE ENEMY WARSHIPS DURING A RAID UP THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER"

"ERICSSON WROTE A LETTER OFFERING HIS SERVICES IN THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF AN ARMOURED 'VESSEL FOR DESTRUCTION OF THE REBEL FLEET'"



The sinking of the U.S.S. Cumberland by the Merrimack



USS Osage (1863-1865) photographed on the Red River, Louisiana, c. March-May 1864

Lincoln offered additional support, and in October 1861, the Ironclad Board awarded a third contract for "an ironclad, shot-proof steam battery." Although there were sceptics, time was of the essence and Ericsson had promised a swift delivery, agreeing to reimburse the government's $275,000 investment in the enterprise if it happened to fail.

Construction was completed rapidly at Continental Iron Works in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York. Some accounts assert that the basic project was finished within 98 days, and USS Monitor was eventually commissioned on 25 February 1862. Its innovative rotating turret was armed with two 11-inch (280mm) Dahlgren guns, and Monitor's unique profile soon earned it the affectionate nickname of 'cheese box on a raft'.

Showdown at Hampton Roads

Rumours swirled that the Confederate ironclad at Gosport would soon sally forth to do battle with the blockading wooden ships of the US Navy in Hampton Roads. Mechanical issues delayed Monitor's deployment, but these were corrected quickly and the ironclad departed Brooklyn for Chesapeake Bay on 6 March 1862, under the command of Captain John Worden, who hoped to destroy the Confederate Virginia at its moorings. Battered by heavy seas, Monitor reached Hampton Roads on the night of 8 March, buoying the morale of the sailors aboard the blockading ships as the strange craft crept into view. These men were shaken – Virginia had already come to call.

Hours earlier, the Confederate ironclad, escorted by five steamers of the rebel navy, had sortied down the Elizabeth River. Its commander, Flag Officer Franklin Buchanan, was determined to wreak havoc among the wooden warships of the enemy. When the iron monster was sighted, the alarm was raised and sailors scrambled to their stations.

Franklin ordered Virginia to steer toward the sloop of war USS Cumberland, anchored in the channel near the town of Newport News. Soon the Confederate ironclad's guns were blazing away at the wooden enemy, whose sailors manned their weapons and replied. Gathering momentum, Virginia rammed Cumberland on the starboard side just below the waterline.

As water rushed into the gaping hole, Buchanan tried to back away from the stricken sloop, but Virginia's ram was stuck fast. For a few agonising moments, it appeared that both

IRON DAWN

IRONCLAD WARSHIPS OF NUMEROUS DESIGNS AND VARIED FUNCTIONS BEGAN TO DOMINATE THE WORLD'S MAJOR NAVAL FORCES IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY

GLOIRE

Displacing 5,529 tons, the French Navy's Gloire was the world's first oceangoing ironclad. Entering service in 1859, Gloire made wooden ships of the line obsolete, only to be eclipsed itself within a year.

HMS WARRIOR

Launched in 1860, HMS Warrior, the Royal Navy's first oceangoing armoured frigate, was constructed with an iron hull. Within a decade, newer designs had begun to relegate Warrior to second-line duties.

CSS TENNESSEE

The ironclad ram Tennessee was commissioned in February 1864, even as the Civil War was going badly for the Confederacy. Tennessee was captured during the Battle of Mobile Bay.

USS GALENA

Constructed with armour plating covering its wooden hull, the broadside ironclad USS Galena was commissioned in 1862 and sustained serious damage duelling shore batteries during the Battle of Drewry's Bluff.

The American Civil War saw the first engagement between ironclad vessels

***Left:** Swedish-born engineer John Ericsson revolutionised warship design and construction with his ironclad USS Monitor, dubbed a 'cheese box on a raft'*

ships might sink. Suddenly, the ram broke off the ironclad's bow and Buchanan pulled free.

Cumberland sank rapidly, taking 121 crewmen to watery graves while at least 20 others were wounded. The sloop's gunners bravely fired at the ironclad, their shells striking home but bouncing off the Confederate vessel's armoured veneer. Buchanan admired the courage of the Union gunners and later wrote that they were, "gallantly fighting her guns as long as they were above water."

Sailors aboard the nearby Congress were aghast. In the confusion of evasive manoeuvres, their ship and the 44-gun steam frigate USS Minnesota had run aground. Buchanan turned Virginia toward the James River, and it appeared for a moment that the wounded behemoth might retire. Then, a deliberate turn toward Congress dispelled any thought that the fight was over.

For two hours, Virginia's guns raked Congress, killing and wounding scores of men before the survivors struck their colours. Although it was plain that the ship had surrendered, Union shore batteries opened fire on Virginia. Buchanan flew into a rage, began to fire a rifle at the Union shore batteries from Virginia's top deck and ordered Congress set afire. He was wounded in the thigh by a Union sharpshooter, and command of Virginia fell to its executive officer, Lieutenant Catesby ap Roger Jones.

Minnesota squatted helplessly aground, easy prey for Virginia. But by late afternoon, Jones was concerned that the ironclad had sustained some damage and might be stranded as the tide began to ebb. He was sure that Virginia could return the following day to finish off Minnesota.

As Monitor entered Chesapeake Bay, its crew heard the sound of distant cannon. By the time the Union ironclad reached the scene, the day's fighting had ended. Congress burned until after midnight, when the flames reached its powder magazine and erupted like a volcano. Efforts to dislodge Minnesota were fruitless, and Monitor took up a position to defend the wooden frigate if the battle was renewed the next day.

Fog shrouded Hampton Roads on the morning of 9 March 1862, but just after 8am, Virginia had chugged within range and fired a salvo at Minnesota. Several Confederate sailors noticed an odd-looking vessel approaching. In a few minutes, the world's first naval battle between two ironclad warships was joined.

Manoeuvring to within yards of Virginia, Worden gave the order for Monitor's gunners to open fire. Virginia turned a full broadside against the new threat, and its fury rattled every rivet in Monitor's turret. After the battle, dents and scars from Virginia's repeated broadsides offered evidence of the fight, but Monitor held together. For four hours, the two ironclads hammered eachother. Monitor's gunners were vexed when they were unable to orient themselves toward the target based on Worden's commands amid thick smoke. The rotating turret did not stop easily, and soon enough the gunners were actually firing on-the-fly as it turned.

"SEVERAL CONFEDERATE SAILORS NOTICED AN ODD-LOOKING VESSEL APPROACHING. IN A FEW MINUTES, THE WORLD'S FIRST NAVAL BATTLE BETWEEN TWO IRONCLAD WARSHIPS WAS JOINED"

THE END OF THE AMERICAN IRONCLAD

ADVANCING NAVAL TECHNOLOGY LEFT THE LAST OF THE US NAVY'S IRONCLADS IN RESERVE OR DESIGNATED AS SCRAP PRIOR TO 1900

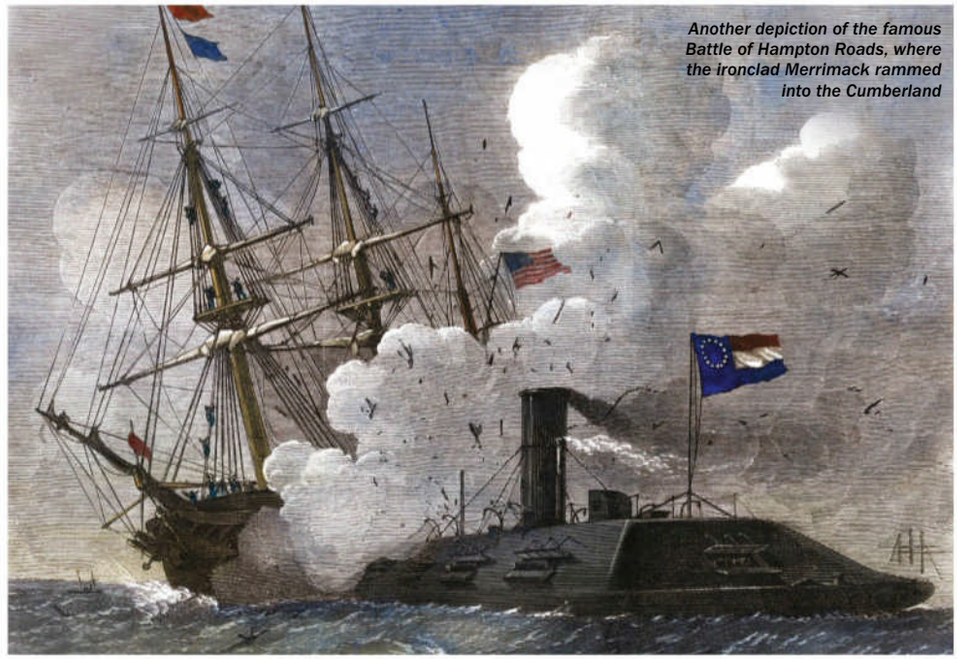
At the end of the Civil War, the US Navy was second only to the British Royal Navy in strength, with more than 50,000 personnel and 700 warships, dozens of them patterned after the iconic ironclad USS Monitor. At least 36 of the 60 ironclads authorised during the war on the basic Monitor blueprint had been constructed.

From there, however, the navy entered a period of decline. By the 1870s, most of the Civil War-era ironclad monitors had been retired. A decade later a program of modernisation led to the construction of several protected cruisers, so called because armour decking protected internal compartments from exploding shells. The Navy Act of 1890 authorised the construction of the US Navy's first designated battleships.

Although it did not see action during the Civil War, the French-built ironclad ram CSS Stonewall, intended for the Confederate Navy, was purchased by the United States from the Spanish government in Cuba in the spring of 1865. The ironclad was sold to Japan four years later as that nation sought to modernise its navy. Renamed Kotetsu, it participated in the Battle of Miyako Bay on 25 March 1869, during the Boshin War. Nearly 20 years later, Kotetsu was scrapped as Japan was well on its way to acquiring a modern navy that would one day confront the United States for pre-eminence in the Pacific.

Commissioned in 1895, the protected cruiser USS Olympia gained fame during the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War

Photographed in 1865, the ironclad CSS Stonewall was sold to Japan and renamed Kotetsu, serving with the Imperial Navy for two decades



Another depiction of the famous Battle of Hampton Roads, where the ironclad Merrimack rammed into the Cumberland

A few minutes after noon, one of Virginia's rifled stern guns fired directly at Monitor's pilothouse, striking home from a mere nine metres distant. Worden, peering through the vision slit, was temporarily blinded. After giving the order for Monitor to sheer away from the fight to assess the damage, he turned over command to executive officer Lieutenant Samuel Dana Greene.

Lieutenant Jones, in command of Virginia after Buchanan was wounded, interpreted Monitor's breakaway manoeuvre as one of retreat. Virginia had also taken a pounding. Its crew was exhausted, several sailors were wounded and the tide was beginning to recede. Jones headed for Gosport. From Monitor's damaged pilothouse, Greene saw his enemy turn for home and believed the Confederates had broken off the fight.

Although both sides claimed victory, the first battle of ironclad warships ended in a draw. Still, naval officers and shipbuilders around the world took note. Forever afterward, navies of iron and steel would rule the waves. The great sailing ships had been relegated to the past in an afternoon.

Lessons at Lissa

The first fleet action between ironclad warships occurred at Lissa in the Adriatic Sea on 20 July 1866, during the Third Italian War of Independence. An Austrian fleet that included seven ironclad frigates decisively defeated an Italian task force comprised of 12 ironclads. Both fleets included wooden-hulled ships.

As the battle wore on, it became apparent that neither the Austrians nor the Italians possessed the firepower to inflict serious damage on the other's armoured ships. Both sides resorted to ramming and ultimately the Italians lost a pair of ironclads.

Although Lissa was one of the last naval battles in history to include ramming as a primary offensive tactic, its influence resulted in a revival of the anachronistic ram, which was installed on armoured ships of numerous navies through the 1880s.

Ironclad aftermath

The USS Monitor served as a prototype for two subsequent classes of US Navy ironclads. The Passaic and Canonicus classes included coastal and riverine monitors with improved construction elements, such as thicker armour and pilothouses relocated to the turret rather than situated on the deck in the line of fire. The Canonicus-class Tecumseh led the Union naval attack at Mobile Bay in 1864 and was sunk by a floating mine, inspiring Admiral David Farragut to utter the famous line, "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!"

A few of the monitors built for the US Navy during the Civil War remained in service through the Spanish-American War and the turn of the 20th century. As for armoured warships of traditional design, masts and rigging inevitably faded away. In the 1870s, iron gave way to steel as the primary warship material.

Casemated armament evolved to gun barbettes and rotating turrets that became familiar along with a new generation of warships, including armoured or protected cruisers and later modern battleships, cruisers and destroyers. Breech-loading guns supplanted the muzzleloaders, barrels were lengthened for greater muzzle velocity and armour-piercing shells were developed by the early 1900s.

Admiral Horatio Nelson, the Royal Navy's hero of the epic Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, once said, "No captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of the enemy." The evolution of the ironclad rendered that statement an allusion to a bygone era. While Monitor and Virginia had slugged away at close range, more powerful guns eventually led to naval duels during which combatants were literally miles apart.

The rapid advance of technology during the ironclad era had resulted in some warships becoming functionally obsolescent as soon as they were launched. Within half a century of the encounter at Hampton Roads, capital ships of steel mounting heavy guns in multiple turrets were thundering during World War I.

Images: Alamy

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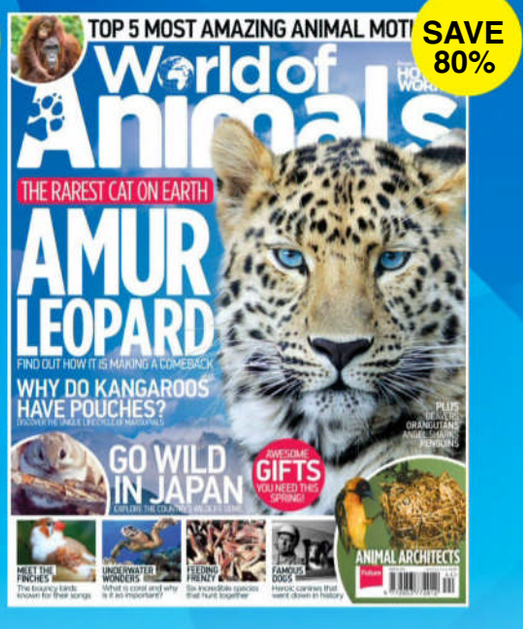

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BRIEFING

Shining Path

For more than a decade, the Maoist terrorist group Sendero Luminoso wrought terror across Peru. Here is the macabre saga of Latin America's dirtiest war

WORDS **MIGUEL MIRANDA**

More than 150 years after independence from Spain, the Andean nation of Peru had not yet decided on its manifest destiny. Decade after decade, through war and crisis, it wavered between democratic rule and brutal caudillo dictatorship. Lodged in a corner of South America, the ancient country survived on exporting minerals and metals to the developed world. In the 1970s, however, it was enduring another dictatorship amid economic turmoil.

When the regime of General Francisco Morales Bermúdez was about to cede power in democratic elections, nefarious deeds were afoot elsewhere. It was May 1980, and in the town of Chuschi, ballot boxes were set alight. This flagrant arson was the first symbolic act of Sendero Luminoso, or the Shining Path, a Maoist fringe group that arose in the impoverished Ayacucho region.

This total disregard for vital institutions and due process soon became a hallmark of the Senderistas, who were young men and women recruited by the enigmatic President Gonzalo. In what amounted to near-farce, the would-be revolution from Peru's underclass was launched by a bourgeois university professor obsessed with Mao Zedong. Disenchanted with the aimlessness of Peru's own lukewarm communists, Abimael Guzmán Reynoso was convinced a struggle akin to China's civil war would redeem his country.

Starting from a boarding house in the city of Ayacucho where he worked at the local university, Guzmán sought out like-minded fellows and spent a decade preaching to a small flock. By 1980, a personality cult was established around his person, addressed as Comrade or Presidente Gonzalo, and a rudimentary headquarters for the movement was operational: The First Military School of the Communist Party of Peru – Shining Path. It was here where Guzmán beseeched his flock to "convert the black fire into red and the red into pure light."

This grandiloquence, which sounded even more theatrical when uttered in Spanish, was emblematic of Guzmán's leadership style. He was an orator who read great novels and Greek philosophy. He was the last person anyone would suspect to be a terrorist mastermind.

Ignoring how China's current leader, Deng Xiaoping, had warmed to capitalism and foreign investment in 1978, Guzmán and his loyalists sought to capture the Peruvian countryside and lead a peasant revolt. This process, of course, involved killing many people.

The Shining Path's first targets were policemen, those local authority figures in every pueblo who represented the loathsome state and its corruption. Peru still maintained the trappings of a feudal society, where white-skinned mestizos from the coastal sierra lorded over the indigenous rural peasants from the interior. For Guzmán and his conspirators, separating either was essential before the Shining Path could begin assailing the nation's power elite in the capital, Lima.

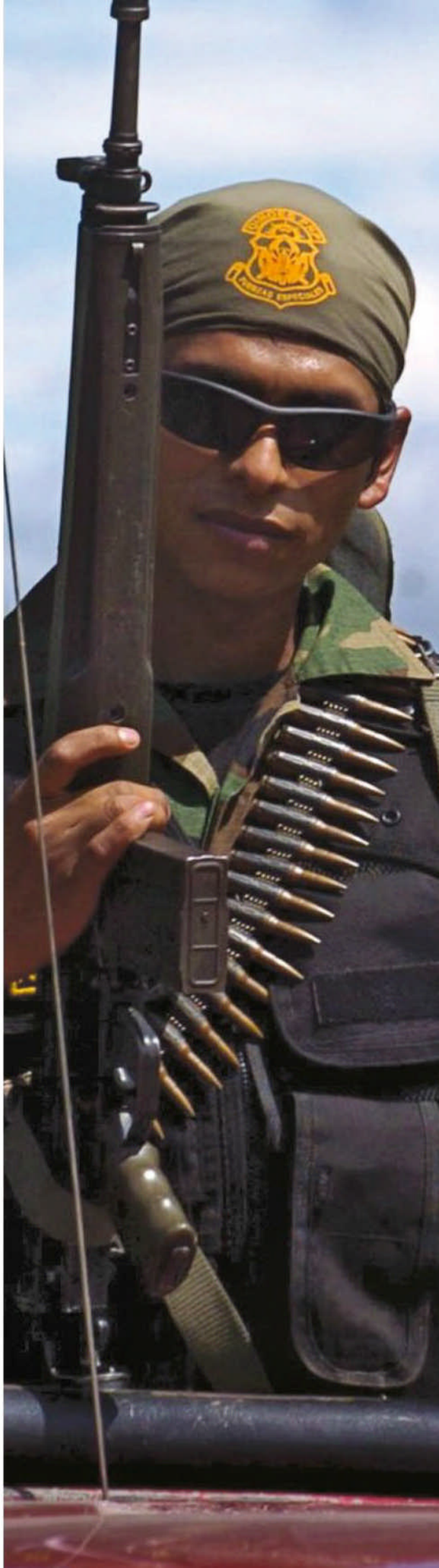
Neither a grassroots revolt nor savvy guerrilla force, the Shining Path recruited

THE REPUBLIC IN CHAOS

1821
General Jose de San Martin and his army capture Lima in July and independence is declared before the month's end. The Peruvian campaign drags on until 1824 with Simon Bolívar assuming a brief presidency.

1826
A political crisis in Colombia forces President Bolívar to vacate his post and depart the country. A civil war between feuding caudillos erupts in his wake and Peru is wracked by several conflicts for several decades.

1879
Peru, Bolivia and Chile are embroiled in a war for land and resources. The War of the Pacific lasts several years and ends in 1883 with a clear-cut Chilean victory.



Peruvian anti-narcotics agents patrol near the town of Aucayacu, once a Shining Path stronghold

"GUZMÁN AND HIS LOYALISTS SOUGHT TO CAPTURE THE PERUVIAN COUNTRYSIDE AND LEAD A PEASANT REVOLT. THIS PROCESS, OF COURSE, INVOLVED KILLING MANY PEOPLE"

impressionable young men and women from the impoverished countryside surrounding Ayacucho and had them carry out the group's dirty work – at first with knives, then guns and dynamite. Within a year, the Shining Path had abolished government control over dozens of small village and towns. It helped that President Fernando Belaúnde's civilian government was weighed down by an ailing economy. Peru was getting poorer and society's bonds were beginning to fray. The Shining Path added unwanted chaos to the mix.

Another advantage possessed by the group was its superb organisation, itself a symptom of Guzmán's leftist sensibilities. The teeming slums around Lima were a fertile recruiting ground for informants. There was no shortage of remote farms where impoverished families embraced the Sendero creed. A chain of command also existed, which included Guzmán's wife, Augusta La Torre, a handpicked cadre of right-hand men and smaller committees spread over different regions.

This is why the Shining Path proved so virulent in Latin America's dark age. As smaller wars raged in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Colombia, while Brazil, Chile and Argentina bore the yoke of dictatorship; Peru was doomed to suffer ultra-violence beyond measure.

Pizarro's deadly embrace

As terrible an aberration as the Shining Path used to be, the twisted roots of its origins run deep in South America's historical record. One must journey at least 500 years in the past to understand the conditions that brought about its existence.

Lusting for fresh conquests after the fall of the Aztecs, the victorious Spanish Conquistadors journeyed southward. In 1532 a small army led by Francisco Pizarro dismantled the Inca Empire. The Incas were the lords of the Andes, commanding impregnable fortresses and trade routes that stretched from present-day Ecuador to the deserts of Chile.

Absolute terror and ruthlessness were the preferred methods of these Spanish adventurers. They seized the Incan ruler, Atahualpa, and massacred his entourage. With the sovereign now a hostage, the Spanish demanded an exorbitant ransom in gold but executed their captive anyway, on 16 November 1532. Years of warfare followed and with the Incas driven from their majestic cities, the Spaniards began subjugating nearby tribes. From this disorder arose Peru, whose silver mines filled the coffers of the Spanish Empire.

The legacy of the conquistadors was a cruel one. Entire communities were reduced to serfdom in vast estates ruled by Spanish soldiers. This created the modern pattern of the country's politics, where martial overlords impose their will on the destitute masses.

***Above:** Soldiers and police often wore ski masks to protect themselves from being targeted by the Shining Path*

This inequitable system nearly fell apart in the late 18th century. A tax collector named José Gabriel Condorcanqui led a revolt against the colonial administration in 1780. His original aim was usurped by the Indians who flocked to his banner and almost marched on Lima. The rebellion led by Condorcanqui, who christened himself Túpac Amaru, spread as far away as the countries now called Bolivia, Chile and Argentina. It was a nativist rising where a downtrodden people and their heritage sought freedom from the Spanish.

Túpac Amaru's revolt was a failure. After being captured, he and his wife were brought to Lima. She was garroted and he was quartered, with arms and legs torn from their sockets, before his head was chopped off.

Peru was swept up in Latin America's wars of independence during the 19th century, when the armies of Simon Bolívar and José de San Martín sought to reshape the continent. No less than Bolívar himself served as its first president and under his guidance, the beginnings of a great country took shape. But Peru quickly suffered from its contradictions and quarrelled with its neighbours. Petty civil wars plagued the young country from 1826 onward. The War of the Pacific, from 1879-83, broke Peru's union with Bolivia and ruined its economy. A further humiliation came from the Chileans, who imposed reparations and annexed land as part of the victor's spoils.

At least a handful of civil wars erupted in Peru because its political leaders, who mostly hailed from the armed forces, never shied away from violent power struggles. It was the calming force of the 20th century that imposed a lasting peace. Peru was a giant plantation, where the

1941
A lingering border dispute with neighbouring Ecuador erupts in war. The fighting lasts for several months, from July 1941 until January 1942. Both countries fight again in 1981 and in 1995.

1948
General Manuel Odría seizes power after launching a coup d'etat. A populist and staunch defender of the status quo, Odría remains in power until 1963 when he's replaced by a civilian president.

1968
A coup d'etat is launched to impose a reform agenda on the Peruvian economy. General Juan Velasco Alvarado nationalises state assets. Land reform is carried out to benefit peasant farmers.

1970
Peru is in the grip of military dictatorship. Abimael Guzmán organises the first Sendero Luminoso cell in Huamanga University. The small group's activities remain clandestine and don't involve violence.

One of Shining Path's top commanders, Edgar Mejia, also known as 'Izulu', is arrested in 2010

"THE FORMER ARSONISTS AND ASSASSINS FROM THE BADLANDS LEARNED FROM THEIR MISTAKES AND GREW INTO A WELL-OILED KILLING MACHINE"

ruling class grew rich from global trade, be it from mines or guano deposits, while a poor majority of dispossessed Indians remained mired in poverty.

This was a common enough dichotomy throughout Latin America, but in Peru it set the stage for the bloodbath launched by Guzmán's bloodthirsty Maoists.

The president falls

Another unique trait of the Shining Path was its independence of action. Not having foreign patrons to supply them meant waging a perpetual low-tech insurgency focused on arson and homicide. But this was done on such a scale that it eclipsed another Peruvian terrorist group, the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement whose acronym in Spanish spelt MRTA. Guzmán's adherence to his own brand of Marxist-Maoism was so intense it produced a rivalry with the upstart MRTA.

Just like armies, rebel groups need their own logistics, and the Shining Path relied on a network of informants and sympathisers. When it came to the group's financial resources, Peru's Huallaga Valley, with its coca farms and smuggling routes, was infiltrated and occupied. With little interference from the government or the armed forces, Shining Path imposed taxes and fees on the movement of crops. It was the 1980s and the international cocaine boom that made Peru and Bolivia the twin epicentres of the drug's raw material, the coca leaf.

When the Peruvian army took the fight to Shining Path from 1982 onward, the struggle attained a new ferocity. Peru's dictators and generals tended to be ideologues, obsessed with lifting their country from its problems. While a strong domestic security apparatus did exist, it had neither the experience nor the imagination to confront an extremist group like the Shining Path.

This resulted in a 'dirty war.' The goal was to punish entire communities for conspiring with the 'enemy'. The problem was both sides practiced the same. If Shining Path members murdered local community leaders, teachers and judges, the army would move in later and find culprits among local residents. A belated solution was to mobilise villagers and have them act as hyper-local militias alongside regular army units.

A decade of the Shining Path's excesses left Peru on the brink. The economy had unravelled and President Alan García Perez's tough stance on the group had backfired.

Shining Path had evolved too. The former arsonists and assassins from the badlands learned from their mistakes and grew into a well-oiled killing machine. There was almost no method from the terrorist rule book they didn't exploit, from massacres to suicide bombings. Before a near total economic collapse swept the country in 1987, Shining Path made its

1975
The aging dictator Juan Velasco Alvarado is in poor health and a silent coup takes place to install his successor General Morales Bermúdez. His goal is to prepare the country for democratic elections.

1980
On the day before free elections are held to replace the ruling military junta, the Shining Path begins its armed struggle. Ballot boxes are burned in the town of Chuschi.

1982
Turning its back on aid from the United States, Peru modernises its armed forces with a billion dollar arms deal with the Soviet Union. Additional arms are imported from France, Germany and Israel.

1983-84
With Shining Path cells spreading across Peru, the military is sent to the countryside, triggering protracted violence that kills anywhere between 25,000 to 70,000 civilians and leaves $10 billion in economic losses.

1987
Years of sovereign debt draining the government treasury leaves Peru an economic basket case. With incomes dwindling and prices out of control, the resulting hyperinflation triggers an economic crisis.

presence felt in the capital, Lima, with a series of attacks. The method was simple enough: shut down the city's power supply and dynamite offices and precincts. This is exactly what occurred in 1982 just as the armed forces were cracking down on the group. By 1990, Shining Path was recognised as Latin America's most vicious terrorists.

A side-effect of their ceaseless effort to overthrow the government was eradicating Peru's mainstream leftists while discrediting the conservative right wing. Interestingly, this set the stage for the government's eventual triumph over the Shining Path. With the traditional players gone, extremists from the status quo were willing to fight tooth and nail against Presidente Gonzalo's legion.

The process was aided by the rise of President Alberto Fujimori, a half-Japanese political neophyte who voters propelled to victory.

To stave off defeat, Fujimori cast himself as a civilian autocrat. He enacted a clandestine program to liquidate Shining Path cells with the help of the armed forces and the police. But the July bombing of the Miraflores district in Lima that killed 25 people hastened the search for the Shining Path's leader, Guzmán.

The story of how the case was cracked is frankly incredible. For the past 11 years, two detectives, Benedicto Jiménez and Marco Miyashiro, gathered evidence to ascertain Guzmán's whereabouts. A combination of careful stakeouts and forensic examination of garbage led them to the middle class neighbourhood of Surquillo, in Lima of all places, where the Shining Path's mysterious leader was then caught in a raid by police who found him in an upstairs bedroom. This led to follow-up operations by police and intelligence agents on the group's safe houses.

Treated like a cartoon villain, the 58-year-old Guzmán was locked in a cage dressed in prison stripes. TV crews were brought in to film the most dangerous man in Peru. Within a year, a live broadcast of Guzmán declaring an end to hostilities was aired. Overnight, it seemed, the Shining Path lost its momentum and thousands of members abandoned the group.

However, this didn't stop Shining Path fanatics from trying to exact revenge. In 1993, a column of guerrillas arrived in the town of Satipo where they massacred 65 men, women and children as retribution. It was a final ruthless spasm of carnage. From then on, however, Shining Path attacks dropped to almost nil.

Those who remained consisted of a tiny faction commanded by a loyal subordinate named Florindo Eleuterio Flores-Hala, or Comrade Artemio, who led a core group until his capture in 2012. The Shining Path failed as a movement but they were never extinguished. At least a few dozen fighters remain armed to this day.

In 1982 Peru became the first South American country to import Soviet weapons, like this T-55 MBT

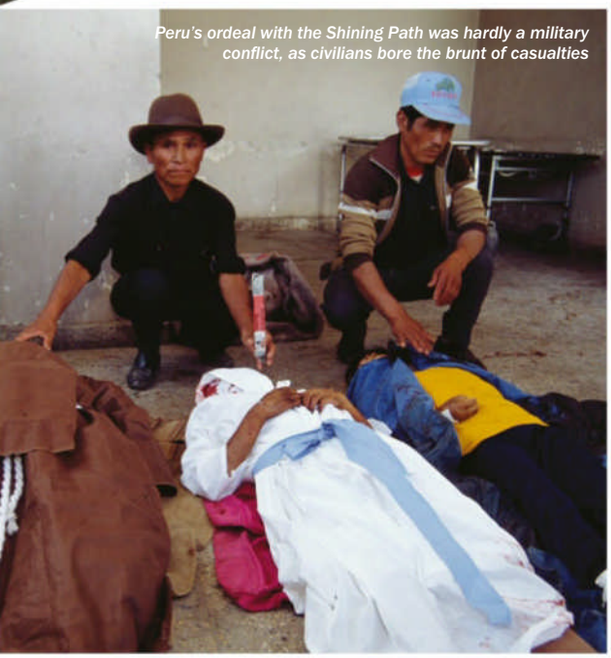
Due to increased Shining Path activity, villagers in the Satipo region have taken their safety into their own hands

1992
On 16 July, Shining Path detonates two car bombs in Lima's upscale Miraflores district. The explosion leaves nearby buildings gutted and 25 people dead. Nearly 200 are injured.

1992
Two years into his embattled presidency, Fujimori trashes the constitution to rule as an autocrat with sweeping powers over the other branches of government. Abimael Guzmán is captured in September and jailed.

1994
With Guzmán declaring an end to hostilities during a televised address, the Shining Path splinters. Up to 6,000 members surrender before the end of the year and its operations cease.

1996
Túpac Amaru terrorists seize the Japanese ambassador's residence in December. Hundreds are taken hostage and four months pass before special forces overrun the compound and execute the perpetrators.



Peru's ordeal with the Shining Path was hardly a military conflict, as civilians bore the brunt of casualties

Truth and reconciliation

In a continent of extremes, Alberto Fujimori's presidency was filled with unforeseen breakthroughs and baffling unlikelihood's. The crowning achievement was Guzmán's downfall and incarceration. The mortal blow it landed on Shining Path cemented Fujimori's appeal among Peruvians and silenced criticism of his regime's unconstitutional methods.

But this came at a price. By 1990, record levels of violence plagued the country with an estimated 3,000 killed by targeted assassinations. In 1992, Fujimori turned his back on the constitution – suspending it, in fact – and strengthened the executive and judicial branches to intensify the war against the Shining Path. This approach enabled him to rule the country for a decade.

With Guzmán behind bars, it became imperative to fix Peru's battered economy, stricken as it was by inflation and ruinous debt collected over the previous 20 years. Given the chronic underdevelopment of its provinces and a growing population in the countryside, the key was to restore Peru's status as an exporter, enact laissez-faire policies, and find new customers via trade deals with its neighbours.

But another shock to Fujimori's legitimacy came in 1996, when 14 Túpac Amaru terrorists stormed the residence of Japan's ambassador. The resulting crisis was twice as embarrassing. Fujimori, whose parents were Japanese, wanted lasting bilateral ties with his ancestral homeland when the terrorists seized the ambassador's house. Worse, the pint-sized MRTA had outdone the defeated Shining Path, whose ranks had crumbled.

Demanding the release of their comrades from government jails and the withdrawal of Japanese foreign investment, the Túpac Amaru contingent – who were composed of young men and women – held 400 high-value hostages in a palatial manor. While they did concede to the authorities during the long four-month siege, by April 1997 the terrorists still held 72 men and were demanding safe passage to Cuba.

It ended when hundreds of commandos stormed the residence using underground tunnels. Only one hostage was killed and once again, Peru's clandestine services could pat themselves on the back for a job well done.

The downfall of Fujimori in 2000 amid a corruption scandal didn't harm Peru's future prospects, but the country did have to face its past. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission established to sort out the abuses and corruption from previous governments revealed the cost of the war against the Shining Path. Up to 70,000 people were killed, most of them civilians, and the economic damage reached $10 billion. The country went on to enjoy a worldwide commodities boom, coupled with solid GDP growth during the 2000s. Its new president, Pedro Kuczynski, is a former banker and understands his country's role in global trade.

With a now 80-year-old Guzmán condemned to spend his last years imprisoned in the Callao naval base, Shining Path has reached a point of total irrelevance and seems destined to extinction by the 2020s. The group won't be remembered fondly.

But for serious students of civil conflict and counter-insurgency, Shinning Path's dark reign offers many lessons on organised violence. With the exception of Mexico's increasingly vicious drug cartels, there has never been a terror group in Latin America as savage as Shining Path – maybe there never should be ever again.

2000

A corruption scandal involving spy chief Vladimiro Montesinos embroils President Fujimori. Within months, he resigns and escapes to Japan a fugitive. Fujimori is given a 25-year sentence in 2009.

2002

A car bomb is detonated outside the US Embassy in Lima a day before US President Bush's visit. Nine are killed and a dozen wounded. The Shining Path are the prime suspects behind the attack.

THE PROFESSOR TURNED TERRORIST

The man hailed by his cadres as 'President Gonzalo' – Abimael Guzmán Reynoso in real life – was responsible for a brutal insurgency that killed tens of thousands. It all began in the San Cristóbal de Huamanga University, where the leftist philosophy teacher dreamed of imposing a Maoist society over Peru during the 1960s and 1970s. That dream, as it turned out, became a vivid nightmare.

Abimael Guzmán, under a strong armed guard, being transferred to San Lorenzo Island for incarceration

Images: Alamy, Getty, Shutterstock

Heroes of the Victoria Cross

RAYMOND DE MONTMORENCY

During an attempt to save a fallen comrade, one lieutenant found himself alone with revolver in hand, surrounded by hundreds of enemy warriors

WORDS **MARK SIMNER**

The Honourable Raymond Harvey Lodge Joseph de Montmorency was a 31-year-old lieutenant from Canada when he found himself participating in one of the most famous British cavalry charges in history. As an officer of the 21st Lancers (Princess of India's), he would face several thousand Mahdists warriors after his regiment crashed head-on into what later turned out to be a carefully prepared trap for the horsemen. What followed was a short but desperate fight for survival, and one that would lead to a number Victoria Crosses being awarded, including one to de Montmorency himself.

De Montmorency was commissioned into the Lincolnshire Regiment as a second lieutenant in late 1887, but later transferred to the 21st Lancers. During his time with the Lancers, in 1889, he was promoted to lieutenant and four years later was appointed adjutant of his regiment. However, de Montmorency would have to wait until 1898 to finally see active service on the battlefield.

The origins of the war against the Mahdists of Sudan go back to 1881, when Muhammad Ahmed Ibn Al-Sayyid Abdullah declared himself to be the true Mahdi (meaning the 'guided one'). This self-proclaimed 'redeemer of Islam' quickly found favour with many in Sudan, a country that was cruelly ruled by Egypt, itself little more than a puppet state of the Ottoman Empire. The smell of rebellion was in the air, and the Mahdi, as he is generally remembered by historians today, was more than willing to exploit the resentment many Sudanese felt towards the Egyptian authorities at Khartoum.

Unaware of what was to come, the British became involved in Egyptian affairs following their invasion of the country in 1882, in response to Ahmed Arabi's nationalist uprising against the Khedive. This unrest in Egypt was swiftly put down by a British expedition led by Lieutenant-General Sir Garnet Wolseley, who decisively defeated Arabi at the Battle of Tel el-Kebir on 13 September. Despite efforts to avoid affairs in Sudan, the British would eventually come into conflict with the Mahdi and his army, known as the Ansar.

As well as Kitchener's reconquest of Sudan from 1896-98, perhaps the most famous event of the long war in Sudan was the killing of General Charles 'Chinese' Gordon at Khartoum. Gordon had gone to the Sudanese capital in order to secure the safe evacuation of Egyptian troops and European civilians from the region and return them to Egypt. However, the British general defied orders and ended up becoming besieged in the city. After some prevarication on the part of the British Government in London, an expeditionary force under Wolseley was dispatched to rescue Gordon, but the city fell before it could be relieved, resulting in the death of the popular general.

There was much uproar among the horrified British public regarding the 'murder' of Gordon, but the government had little appetite to commit British troops to a major campaign in Sudan. The general's death would go unavenged for more than a decade. However, in 1896 the Italian government requested British help in Sudan following the defeat of an Italian force at the Battle of Adwa in March. This defeat left the Italians weak, so sensing a possible major victory over a European power, the Mahdists began to exert pressure on the Italians by advancing towards Eritrea.

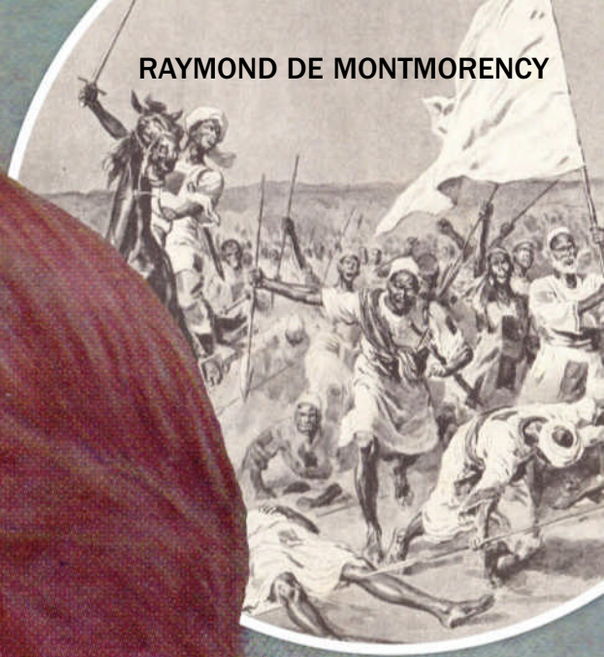
Lord Salisbury, then British prime minister, agreed to limited military action in northern Sudan. What followed was a successful campaign – led by Sir Herbert Kitchener, who was the Sirdar of the recently rebuilt and British-led Egyptian Army – in Dongola. The general defeated the Mahdists, now led by Abdullahi al-Taishi, the Khalifa, following the death of the Mahdi some years before. However, Kitchener thought it wise to keep the momentum going and, most likely due to fears of French occupation of the Nile Valley, an extension to the campaign was authorised. Khartoum was to be retaken, the Ansar destroyed and Gordon's death finally avenged.

The next phase of Kitchener's reconquest of Sudan again saw a number of successful actions against the Mahdists, including the sizeable Battle of Atbara, fought on 8 April 1898. However, despite these the Ansar remained largely intact and the Khalifa at large. Advancing onwards to Khartoum, the Sirdar would finally fight the decisive battle of the war near Omdurman on 2 September. Before making his final advance, Kitchener needed additional British regiments, one of which was the 21st Lancers. It would be at this point that de Montmorency entered the fray.

When the Battle of Omdurman began, the men of the 21st Lancers were out conducting various reconnaissance patrols of the nearby Kerreri plains. As the Ansar advanced, they were watched by cavalry vedettes on the heights of Jebel Surgham, one of which was commanded by a certain Lieutenant Winston Churchill.

It is not clear exactly what de Montmorency was doing in the lead up to the first shots being fired and the subsequent initial phase of the action. He almost certainly would have been with his regiment outside of Kitchener's defensive zariba (a thorny fence or barricade), which had its back to the Nile and was built in a crescent shape around the village of Egeiga.

Lieutenant the Honourable Raymond Harvey Lodge Joseph de Montmorency VC



***Above:** The enemy who de Montmorency would literally come face-to-face with: Mahdist warriors at the Battle of Omdurman*

"LIEUTENANT DE MONTMORENCY, AFTER THE CHARGE OF THE 21ST LANCERS, RETURNED TO ASSIST SECOND LIEUTENANT R. G. GRENFELL, WHO WAS LYING SURROUNDED BY A LARGE BODY OF DERVISHES"

– London Gazette, 15 November 1898

Officers of the 21st Lancers who took part in the charge at Omdurman. De Montmorency is standing third from the left in the second row

The charge of the 21st Lancers at the Battle of Omdurman, 2 September 1898

There was little in the way of combat for de Montmorency and the lancers in the early stages of the fighting, save for a few shots fired by the vedettes at the oncoming Mahdists. However, the 21st would be conducting its first cavalry charge in war, within just a few hours of the battle commencing. It would prove to be an almost total disaster for the regiment, since casualties among the men and their horses would be high, with little gains to show for it afterwards. Nonetheless, it would end with the awarding of no fewer than three Victoria Crosses to the regiment.

Lieutenant-Colonel Rowland Martin, the commanding officer of the 21st, learned that a force of an estimated 700 to 1,000 Mahdist warriors was holding position in a khor known as Abu Sunt. It soon became clear that this force was protecting the Ansar's line of retreat to Khartoum. If the Khalifa and his army withdrew to the city, Kitchener knew he must commit his Anglo-Egyptian troops to costly street fighting in order to take it. The warriors in the khor, therefore, had to be dispersed so as not to hinder the advance of the Egyptian infantry. As such, at about 9am, Martin issued orders for his regiment to prepare for the attack.

What neither Martin, de Montmorency nor any of the other officers didn't know, was that they were about to enter a carefully prepared trap laid by one of the Khalifa's most capable commanders, Osman Digna. He had ordered his few riflemen to take up positions outside of the khor, so as to be visible to the British, while the bulk of his spear and swordsmen were to remain crouched down and concealed in the bottom of the dry watercourse. When the cavalrymen entered the khor, they would be faced with some 2,000 warriors, all waiting to bring down the horses and their riders before putting them to death.

> **"[HIS] HORSE BOLTED UNDER THE SLACKENED MUSCLES, AND DE MONTMORENCY WAS LEFT ALONE WITH HIS REVOLVER AND 3,000 SCREAMING FIENDS"**
>
> – George Warrington Steevens, war correspondent

Nevertheless, the order to charge was given and the 320 men of the 21st set off to engage their quarry. After reaching the halfway point between where the charge began and the khor itself, de Montmorency and the lancers realised the warriors ahead of them were far more numerous than first thought. They were, however, now fully committed and the charge could not be stopped.

Moments later, the cavalrymen smashed their way into their enemy, many of the horses having to jump down up to six feet into the khor. Many of the animals crashed to the ground, losing their riders who were immediately stabbed to death. Others managed to stay on their feet and carried on in the hope of getting out of the depression they were now in.

Somehow, de Montmorency managed to get all the way through the khor to the other side unscathed, despite the many Mahdist warriors that stood in his way. However, as he turned around he saw Lieutenant Robert Grenfell had been knocked from his horse and lay on the ground. Immediately, the lieutenant pulled his horse around and raced back to help his fellow officer, dismounting only to find the man was dead. Putting the body over his saddle, de Montmorency was about to remount his animal when the horse unexpectedly bolted and galloped away – the din of battle no doubt frightening the creature.

Now, all of a sudden, de Montmorency found himself alone except for many dozens of Mahdists, who came bearing down on him waving their spears and swords. Death, it seemed, was now certain. Fortunately for the lieutenant, Captain Paul Kenna was a short distance away watching what had just happened. Without any thought for his own safety, the captain spurred his horse on and cantered over to de Montmorency in a desperate bid to save him. Smashing his way through the warriors, Kenna managed to reach the isolated lieutenant just in the nick of time.

Also watching events was Corporal Fred Swarbrick, who had managed to catch de Montmorency's horse and lead it back to his owner. The lieutenant was then able to remount but the three men now found themselves surrounded by warriors once again.

Despite the odds, the men pushed their horses forward and began to hack their way out of the khor, eventually reaching the other side and getting to a place of relative safety. Little did they know it at the time, but both de Montmorency and Kenna would receive the Victoria Cross for their actions to save comrades, while Swarbrick would be awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

A total of 20 men and one officer of the 21st Lancers had been killed, with a further four officers and 46 men wounded. Of the 320 horses that took part in the charge, 119 were also either killed or wounded. It was later believed that Mahdist casualties stood at 23 killed. The action had been a near disaster but the charge of the 21st Lancers would go into British Army legend.

On 6 January 1899, de Montmorency was presented his Victoria Cross by Queen Victoria at Osborne House. In addition, he would also receive the Queen's and Khedive's Sudan campaign medals. He remained in the army, being promoted to captain, and would later go to South Africa to fight in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. During this latter campaign, he was killed at the Battle of Stormberg on 23 February 1900, aged 33. He is buried in the Molteno Cemetery in Dordrecht, South Africa.

A trooper of the 21st Lancer in his Sudan kit

Images: Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection & Author's collection

British ingenuity brought the Sherman tank's main weapon to reasonable parity with the German Panther and Tiger during WWII

WORDS MIKE HASKEW

SHERMAN FIREFLY

The Sherman tank was nimble and reliable in the field, and most of all it was available in great numbers from late 1942 through to the end of World War II. Approximately 50,000 of the American-built tanks were manufactured from 1941-45, and the Sherman became the primary armoured fighting vehicle of Allied armies around the world.

When the Sherman debuted with the British Eighth Army at the Battle of El Alamein in North Africa, October 1942, its 75mm gun was capable of dealing with the German PzKpfw. III and PzKpfw. IV tanks deployed with Panzer Armee Afrika. However, as German factories began turning out more powerful tanks, particularly the PzKpfw. V Panther and PzKpfw. VI Tiger, mounting high velocity 75mm and 88mm cannon respectively, the Sherman was at a decided disadvantage.

The tank's original main armament, the short barrelled M2 and its derivative M3 with a longer barrel (both 75mm guns) rapidly became inadequate in armoured combat. The 75's low muzzle velocity along with the increased armour protection of the latest German tanks rendered the gun ineffective at appreciable distance, while the German tanks were often able to destroy a Sherman prior to the Allied tank manoeuvring into reasonable firing range.

Although the Sherman had been conceived as a breakthrough and exploitation weapon, tank versus tank combat in the hedgerows of France and beyond was inevitable. The Americans sought a solution to the firepower disadvantage with the high-velocity 76mm M1 gun. Veteran British tankers and engineers settled on their own high-velocity weapon, a modified version of the Ordnance QF 17-pounder anti-tank gun. The resulting Sherman variant was nicknamed the Firefly due to its substantial muzzle flash when the 17-pounder discharged. The resulting combination of speed and firepower redefined the capabilities of the Sherman tank from D-Day to the end of the war.

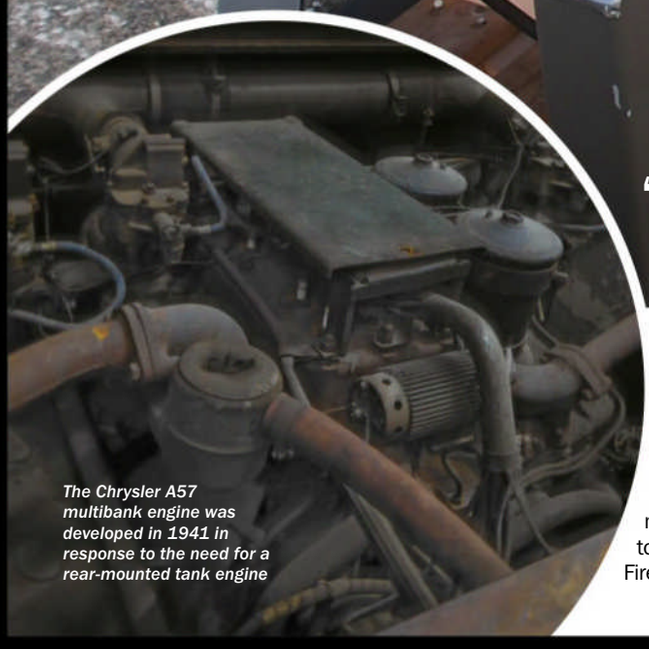
"THE RESULTING SHERMAN VARIANT WAS NICKNAMED THE FIREFLY DUE TO ITS SUBSTANTIAL MUZZLE FLASH WHEN THE 17-POUNDER DISCHARGED"

SPECIFICATIONS

COMMISSIONED: 1943 **CREW:** 4 **ORIGIN:** GREAT BRITAIN
LENGTH: 7.77 METERS (25 FEET, 6 INCHES) OVERALL
RANGE: 193 KILOMETRES (120 MILES)
ENGINE: CONTINENTAL R975 C-1 9-CYLINDER RADIAL GASOLINE ENGINE
PRIMARY WEAPON: 1 X QF 17-POUNDER ANTI-TANK GUN
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 1 X COAXIALLY MOUNTED 7.62MM (.30-CAL.) BROWNING M1919 MACHINE GUN; 1 X TOP MOUNTED 12.7MM (.50 CAL.) BROWNING M2 MACHINE GUN

A Sherman Firefly patrols the Meuse at Namur during the Battle of the Bulge

Continental manufactured the R975 aircraft engine for use in armoured vehicles. During World War II the company produced more than 53,000 R975s



The Chrysler A57 multibank engine was developed in 1941 in response to the need for a rear-mounted tank engine

"THE CONTINENTAL R975 WAS ORIGINALLY AN AIRCRAFT ENGINE MODIFIED FOR USE IN ARMOURED VEHICLES"

ENGINE

Three Sherman tank models were converted in British facilities to the Firefly configuration. The M4 and M4 composite, named due to both cast and welded hull components, were powered by the Continental R975 9-cylinder radial gasoline engine capable of generating up to 400 horsepower, while the M4A4 variant utilised the 470-horsepower Chrysler A57 multibank gasoline engine. The Continental R975 was originally an aircraft engine, modified for use in armoured vehicles, and the hull of the Sherman was lengthened slightly to accommodate the rear-mounted, 30-cylinder Chrysler A57. The top speed for the Sherman Firefly reached 40 kilometres (25 miles) per hour.

Left: A Firefly crew of 1st Northamptonshire Yeomanry load ammunition for the 17-pounder prior to Operation Totalise

"FULL PRODUCTION BEGAN THAT YEAR, AND ITS ARMOUR-PIERCING AMMUNITION PROVED CAPABLE OF DEFEATING THE LATEST GERMAN TANKS"

While German tanks were prone to mechanical failure, the Sherman was robust and easily serviced in the field

ARMAMENT

The Ordnance QF 17-pounder anti-tank gun was a high-velocity 76.2mm (3-inch) weapon designed to replace the 6-pounder gun that was rapidly becoming obsolete during World War II. Development began in 1940, and a production line was established the following spring. As German PzKpfw. VI Tiger tanks reached North Africa in 1943, the 17-pounder was rushed into service. Full production began that year, and its armour-piercing ammunition proved capable of defeating the latest German tanks. Major George Brighty and Lieutenant Colonel George Witheridge are credited with the idea of pairing the Sherman tank with the 17-pounder to produce the Firefly.

The 17-pounder gun of the Sherman Firefly extended considerably longer than the original 75mm weapon mounted with the tank

The driver position in the Sherman tank chassis is situated forward in the hull and to the left. The tillers the driver used to operate the tank are visible in front

The crew of this Sherman Firefly is unbuttoned as their tank moves forward along a crowded street

"THE HULL GUNNER, OR CO-DRIVER, POSITION WAS VACATED TO PROVIDE SPACE FOR THE LARGE PROJECTILES FIRED BY THE 17-POUNDER GUN"

Below: The cramped interior of the conventional Sherman tank was made even tighter with the addition of the Firefly's heavy 17-pounder

INTERIOR

The standard five-man crew of the Sherman tank was reduced to four with the Firefly. The hull gunner, or co-driver, position was vacated to provide space for the large projectiles fired by the 17-pounder gun. The confines of the turret presented challenges for the accommodation of the big weapon as well. The Firefly commander was positioned to the rear of the turret with the loader forward and left of the gun breech, and the gunner forward to the right. The driver was seated in the front of the hull to the left and operated the gearbox with levers.

Now a museum piece, the Sherman Firefly changed the dynamic of combat on the Western Front during World War II

DESIGN

Several design modifications were required to convert the Sherman tank to the more-powerful Firefly. The weapon itself was reconfigured with recoil cylinders shortened and relocated to the sides, while the breech was rotated 90 degrees for side loading and the gun cradle shortened to accommodate the 17-pounder. The tank's radio was moved to a steel box called a bustle, which was welded to the rear of the turret. Since the gun consumed a considerable amount of space, a second hatch was built into the top of the turret to allow the crew to bail out if the tank caught fire during battle.

SERVICE HISTORY

THE SHERMAN FIREFLY AND ITS 17-POUNDER GUN GAVE BRITISH ARMOURED UNITS ON THE WESTERN FRONT A REASONABLE CHANCE TO DEFEAT GERMAN TANKS

The bitter lessons of armoured combat against German forces were not lost on the British and Commonwealth veterans, who recognised that the 75mm main gun of the M4 Sherman tank was inadequate against the superb high-velocity cannon of enemy Panthers and Tigers, and two enterprising British officers set out to remedy the situation in early 1943.

Major George Brighty and Lieutenant Colonel George Witheridge of the Royal Tank Regiment saw the solution in combining the Sherman and a more-powerful main weapon, the Ordnance QF 17-pounder gun. Progress was frustratingly slow, and the two were ordered to cease the effort; however, a new champion came forward – Vickers engineer WGK Kilbourn, whose genius solved the problems inherent in marrying the Sherman turret with the 17-pounder.

Firefly production began in January 1944, and by 6 June 1944, D-Day, a total of 342 had been delivered to British armoured units. The Firefly proved its worth in Normandy and the Germans took note that the tank, easily distinguished from the conventional Sherman due to the length of the 17-pounder's barrel, was a formidable opponent. The Germans sought to neutralise the Firefly threat first in any armoured encounter, and British crews camouflaged their gun barrels with various paint schemes.

In action, experienced Firefly tankers often gave as good or better than they received. On 14 June 1944, a Firefly of the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards destroyed two German Panthers from a distance of 800 meters (870 yards), relocated, and then blasted three more in rapid succession. The remarkable feat put five enemy tanks out of action with five shots.

In August, a Firefly of the 1st Northamptonshire Yeomanry destroyed three enemy Tiger tanks, possibly killing legendary German ace Michael Wittmann. During the course of World War II, some 2,200 Sherman tanks were converted to the Firefly specification.

A camouflaged Sherman Firefly, its commander peering from his hatch atop the turret, sits amid the rubble of a devastated city

Images: Alamy

REVIEWS

Our pick of the newest military history titles waiting for you on the shelves

WARRIORS AND KINGS

THE 1,500-YEAR BATTLE FOR CELTIC BRITAIN

Writer: Martin Wall **Publisher:** Amberley **Price:** £20 **Released:** 20 February 2017

DIG INTO 1,500 YEARS OF THE WELSH FIGHTING THE ENGLISH... AND EACH OTHER

The title is not strictly accurate. While the book is certainly about warriors and kings, rather than Celtic Britain, Wall concentrates almost exclusively on the long struggle between the English and the Welsh.

Although the first chapters delve into the pre-history of the wider Celtic peoples, once the Angles and the Saxons enter the story, the book tracks the long and fraught relations between the Welsh and the English, with only passing nods towards the other Celtic areas, such as Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall and Brittany. By thus concentrating on the encounters between English and Welsh, Wall misses the chance to elucidate one of the key aspects of Celtic culture: the way that the sea allowed a people that were, geographically, widely spread, to maintain a culture held together by song and saga, history and trade.

Once into the turbulent history of Anglo/Welsh relations, Wall does a good job of leading the reader through the tangled and deeply depressing history of Welsh internecine warfare, where brothers routinely turned on each other in suicidally sanguinary warfare.

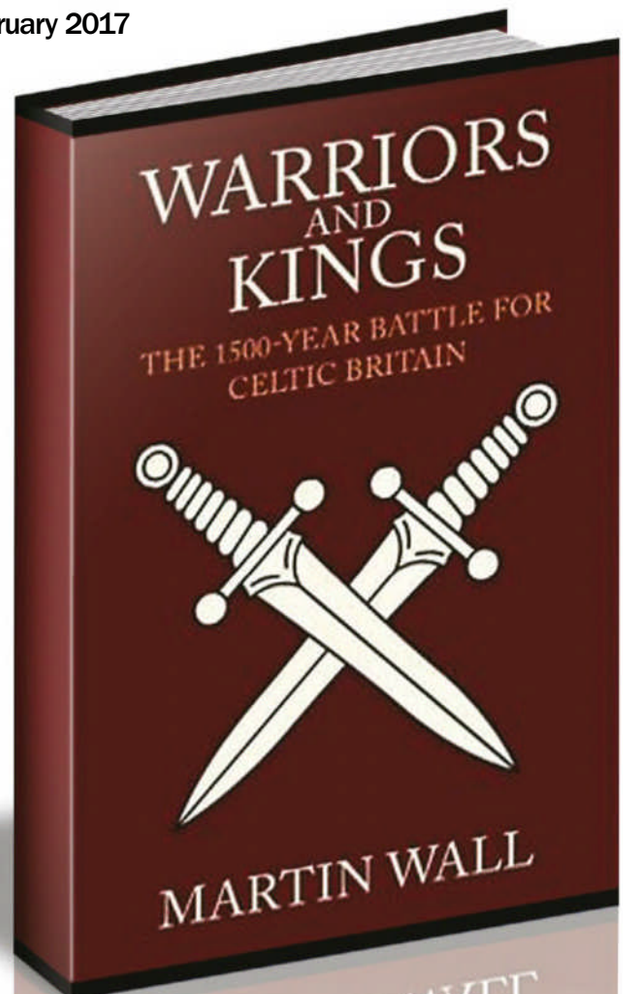
What Wall brings out clearly is that, if there was one factor that ensured ultimate English political dominance over Wales, it was the Celtic practice of partible inheritance, as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon and Norman custom of primogeniture. For the Celts, inheritance was divided equally between all of a man's sons, even including those born illegitimately, whereas the Anglo-Saxon and Norman lords passed their estates on to the eldest born, allowing these lords to increase the family holdings through the generations.

Indeed, the repeating pattern of Welsh resistance to English domination was for a great leader such as Llywelyn the Great, through much toil and conflict, to unite the warring Welsh kingdoms, fight the English to terms, only for everything to fall apart on his death when his sons and heirs resorted to fighting it out over the inheritance.

While Wall brings this aspect of Welsh history vividly to life, his treatment of the religious divide between the Welsh and the English is less convincing. It's undoubtedly true that the church in Wales, which followed Irish practices for dating Easter that diverged from that of the wider church, was seen as heretical and schismatic by churchmen such as Wilfrid. However, Wall comes close to arguing that the English saw fighting the Welsh as an early version of the Albigensian Crusade, despite the fact that the Welsh church had abandoned its heterodox practices by the middle of the 8th century.

In presenting the conflict as rigid orthodoxy against free-spirited heresy, Wall reads the past through the prism of post-Reformation conflicts. He also ignores how the insular Celtic church influenced wider Christianity, suggesting a process in which both sides accommodated and adopted as much as they pronounced anathemas and excommunicated. For example, he fails to mention how the wider Christian church adopted the characteristic Celtic pentitentials and its practice of personal confession, nor the impact that monks on pilgrimage for Christ had in converting the Germanic peoples of north-west Europe.

Although an interesting book within the parameters it adopts for itself, there are better accounts of the struggle and influence of the Celtic peoples in Britain.



"WALL DOES A GOOD JOB OF LEADING THE READER THROUGH THE TANGLED AND DEEPLY DEPRESSING HISTORY OF WELSH INTERNECINE WARFARE"

SPECIAL FORCES BERLIN

CLANDESTINE COLD WAR OPERATIONS OF THE US ARMY'S ELITE 1956-1990

Written by: James Stejskal **Publisher:** Casemate **Price:** £16.58 **Released:** Out now

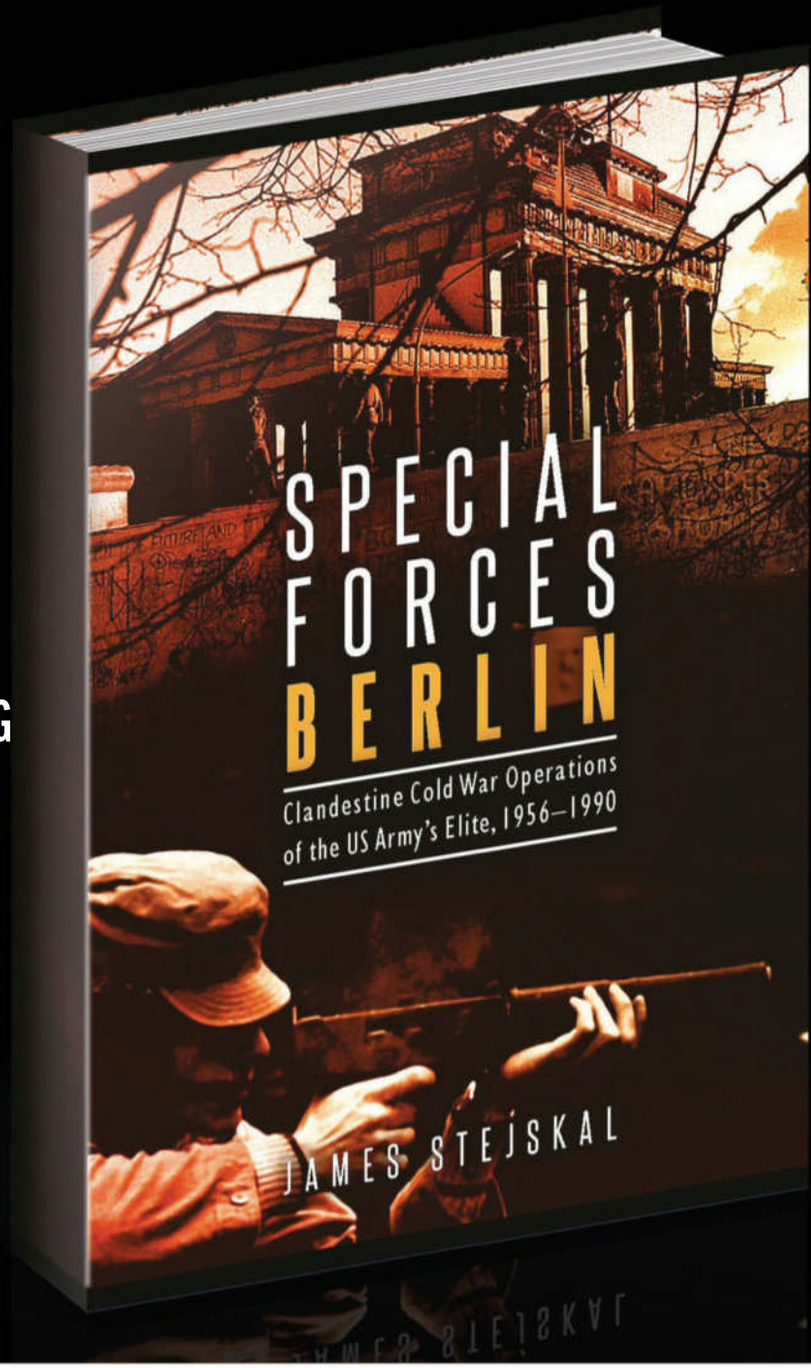
HIDDEN HISTORY COMES TO LIGHT AS A FORMER SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIVE REVEALS A TOP UNIT'S MISSIONS IN BERLIN AND BEYOND...

Berlin during The Cold War was deep in enemy territory. Over 100 miles inside Germany's inner border, and linked to the West by a narrow land corridor bristling with armed guards, the city's west side was seen as an island of Liberal Democracy in an ocean of Soviet Communism. And it was here that the US military stationed a highly classified clandestine special forces unit for almost 50 years.

The task of this group was to undertake what amounted to a suicide mission had the Cold War ever heated up. In the event of hostilities, the unit's role would have been to break out of West Berlin into the East German countryside, and raise a guerrilla army of dissident locals to slow down the advance of Russia's vast army.

Not that they would have had much luck. All the evidence suggests that there was no potential army of DDR dissidents to rely on. The Soviet authorities and the East German Secret Police – the feared Stasi – were highly effective at crushing any opposition to the Moscow-backed Honecker regime. Had war broken out, the 100 men the unit comprised of, would have found themselves trying to fight a guerrilla campaign against an army of 500,000 amid a local population that was indifferent at best.

Having served twice with this secret unit, it's perhaps no surprise that author James Stejskal tells its hitherto unknown story with authority in his new book. He takes us through the formation and evolution of the group from its creation in 1955, introducing us to some of its more notable characters, describing various training exercises and revealing some of the actual reconnaissance missions they carried out behind the Iron Curtain.



"THE READER IS TREATED TO SOMETHING THAT'S MORE AKIN TO A SPY THRILLER"

Indeed, the first and final parts of the book read like a solid military history, and there's nothing wrong with that. But in between these two sections, the reader is treated to something that's more akin to a spy thriller, as the narrative switches from Berlin to Tehran and the action kicks up a gear.

In November 1979, Iranian students stormed the American Embassy in Tehran taking 66 hostages. As the US military planned to rescue them, special forces operatives from Berlin were selected to save three members of the embassy's staff who were detained separately from the main group and bring them to the main extraction point.

Not only did two members of Special Forces Berlin get into Iran but they also managed to conduct a surveillance operation on the building where the hostages were being held, as well as help another group of US undercover agents that was preparing the way for the larger American rescue force. Of course, that force never arrived. Operation Eagle Claw, as it was codenamed, ended in disaster due to a fatal helicopter crash, and interestingly, the author reveals that a second attempt was called off due to political machinations during the US presidential election of 1980.

Truly a fascinating time, which this intriguing book examines from an entirely fresh perspective.

WITH THEIR BARE HANDS

GENERAL PERSHING, THE 79TH DIVISION, AND THE BATTLE FOR MONTFAUCON

Author: Gene Fax **Publisher:** Osprey **Price:** £25 **Released:** Out now

A THOROUGHLY ENGROSSING STUDY OF THE AMERICANS' INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD WAR I

The story of America's role in the last stages of World War I is a familiar one, but by focusing mainly on the experiences of a single American division, the 79th, Gene Fax has been able to reveal a fascinating history that is full of fresh insight.

Fax's narrative follows the 79th from its formation through to the armistice, by which time it had learned some bitter lessons about the reality of modern warfare. The author takes his time detailing the background to the Americans' participation in the war, but that is not to say that the story drags in its early chapters. The raising, equipping and training of the various divisions that would eventually form the American First Army is interesting in its own right, and essential for a proper understanding of what then happened on the battlefields of Europe.

Raising an army almost from scratch would have been a difficult enough task, but faulty planning and a series of baffling decisions made the job all the more vexing. New recruits were constantly drafted into the 79th, while partially trained men were shipped out to new units. The result was that an incredible 95,000 men underwent at least some training with the division, while only 27,000 actually served in it in France. At the moment when it shipped out, more than half of the division had received almost no training at all.

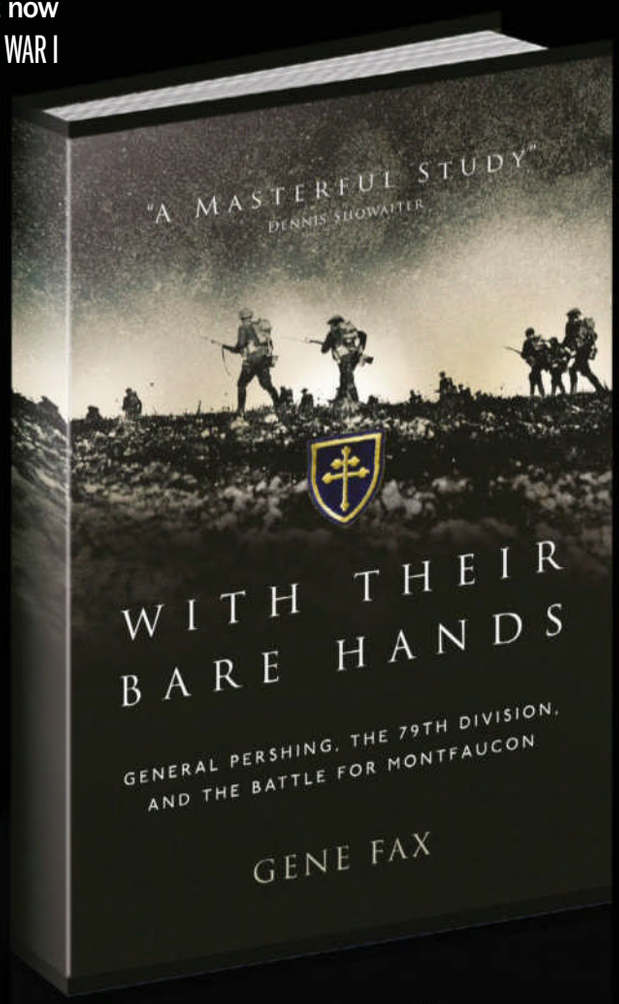
The situation was made worse by the fact that the division's artillery brigade had almost no guns and so was unable to travel to Europe. No training had been done in the critical area of infantry-artillery cooperation. In fact, training had actually begun with no modern rifles and with many men having to make do with sticks.

As the 27,000 men (an American division was officially 28,000 strong, twice the size of their British and French counterparts) left for Europe, they had received no training in gas warfare – indeed, no decision had even been made on who should be responsible for supplying gas masks to the troops.

Furthermore, the American commander-in-chief, General John J Pershing, held the opinion (despite years of evidence to the contrary) that offensive verve and dash was the answer to the stalemate of the Western Front, with the bayonet remaining the primary weapon – this on battlefields now scoured by concentrated artillery and heavy machine-gun fire.

The story of the 79th therefore has an inevitability about it, especially as yet more bad planning handed it the most difficult objective in the First Army's initial major offensive, the Meuse-Argonne Attack of September 1918. Despite having had no front line experience, and never having trained with tanks, the 79th Division was given the job of securing the formidable heights of Montfaucon. To finish the preparations, much of the division's staff officers were reallocated just before the assault began. In hindsight, it is remarkable that the 79th still existed after the offensive at all.

Underpinned by meticulous research and with a flair for handling a hugely complex story, Fax has crafted a highly readable book that both entertains and educates.



"IN HINDSIGHT, IT IS REMARKABLE THAT THE 79TH STILL EXISTED AFTER THE OFFENSIVE"

ALL ABOUT HISTORY RECOMMENDS...

THE PRIVATE LIVES OF THE TUDORS

AN INTIMATE LOOK AT BRITAIN'S FAVOURITE DYNASTY

AUTHOR: TRACY BORMAN **PUBLISHER:** HODDER & STOUGHTON **PRICE:** £9.99 **RELEASED:** OUT NOW

Tracy Borman takes a unique approach to give readers a view of the Tudors that they may not have previously considered.

Instead of comprehensively retelling the events of the day, Borman takes us inside the intimate parts of the palaces and provides a peek at the daily life, with all its not so glorious moments. For those curious about what life in Tudor England was really like, this is the perfect place to start.

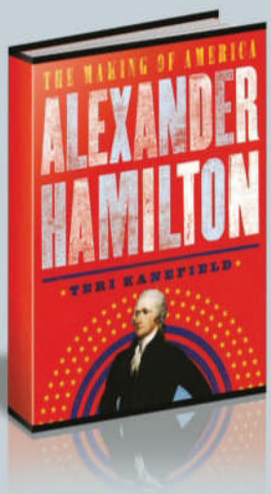
ALEXANDER HAMILTON: THE MAKING OF AMERICA

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUNDING FATHER AND SUBJECT OF BROADWAY'S HIT MUSICAL

AUTHOR: TERI KANEFIELD **PUBLISHER:** ABRAMS BOOKS **PRICE:** £11.99 **RELEASED:** OUT NOW

Without a doubt, Alexander Hamilton is one of the most influential men in American history. A skilled writer and orator, Founding Father and fierce defender of the Constitution, he left his signature on the very foundations of the United States.

Far from a dusty list of facts and figures, in *Alexander Hamilton: The Making of America* writer Teri Kanefield explores Hamilton's complex relationships and his ingenious writings are included throughout giving readers an insight into the mind of the man of the ten-dollar bill.



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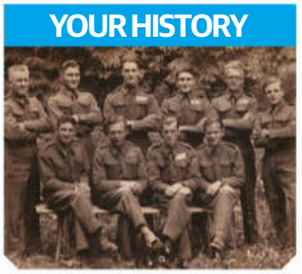

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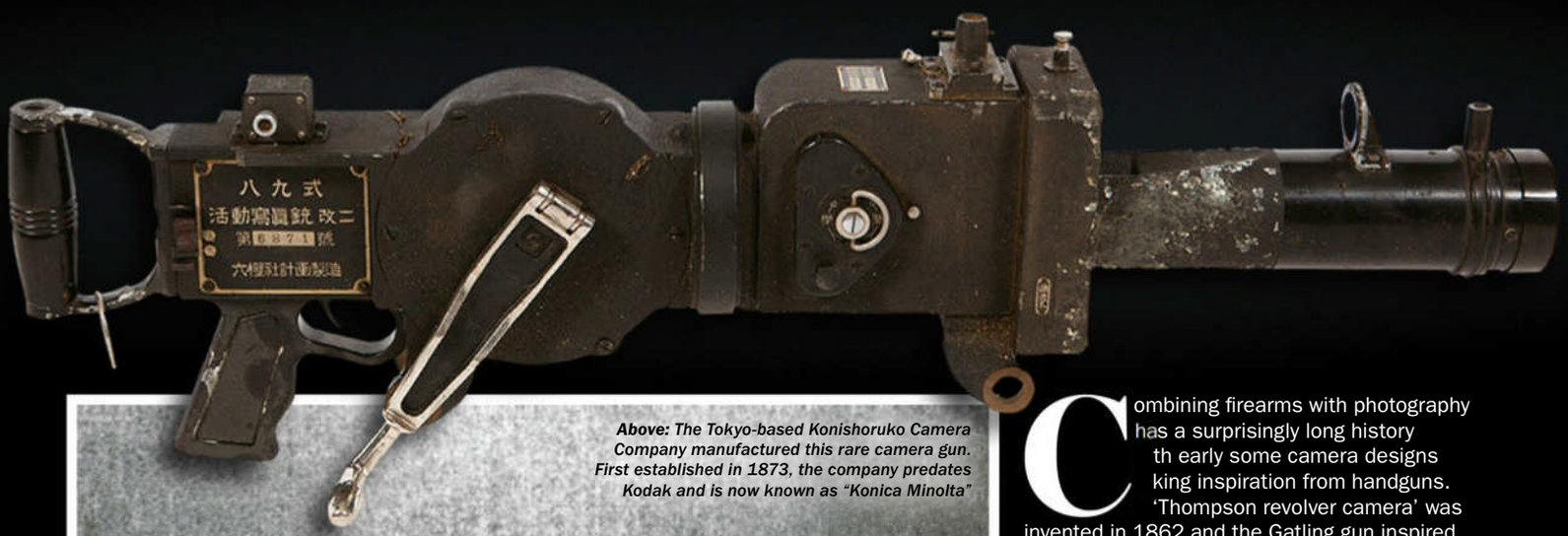
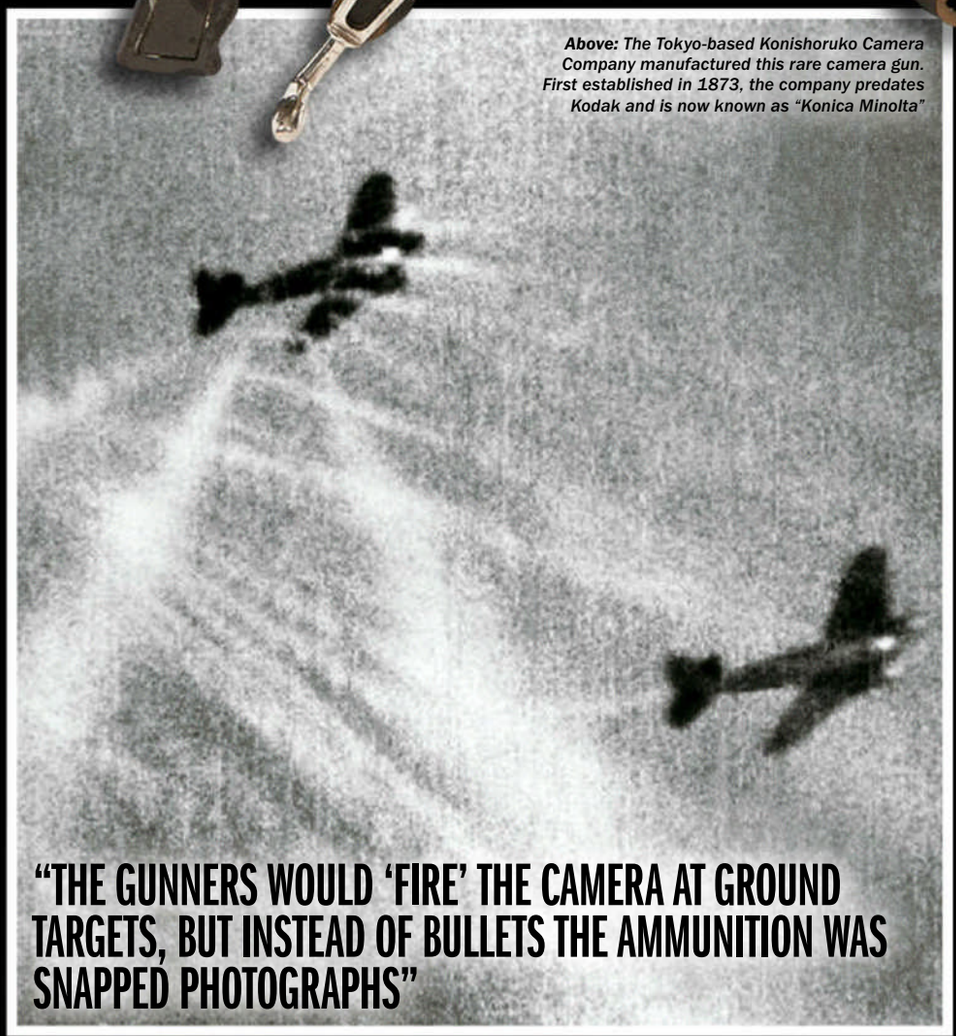
WWII GUN CAMERA

The Japanese used this unique piece of training equipment during WWII to test the accuracy of their aerial gunners



***Above:** The Tokyo-based Konishoruko Camera Company manufactured this rare camera gun. First established in 1873, the company predates Kodak and is now known as "Konica Minolta"*



"THE GUNNERS WOULD 'FIRE' THE CAMERA AT GROUND TARGETS, BUT INSTEAD OF BULLETS THE AMMUNITION WAS SNAPPED PHOTOGRAPHS"

Combining firearms with photography has a surprisingly long history th early some camera designs king inspiration from handguns. 'Thompson revolver camera' was invented in 1862 and the Gatling gun inspired early movie camera hand cranks. Howeve would not be until WWII that a combined 'gun camera' emerged.

WWII gun cameras were usually aerial cameras that were connected to the gun of an aircraft and used to measure firing and tactical effectiveness. This particular model is a Rokuoh-Sha Type 89 that was manufactured by the Konishoruko Camera Company and was captured by an officer of the Royal Air Force at the end of the war.

The camera was used to specifically train aerial machine gunners of the Imperial Japanese Air Services and it would have been mounted to replace real machine guns during training flights. The gunners would 'fire' the camera at ground targets but instead of bullets, the ammunition was snapped photographs. The resulting images would then be developed to gauge the gunner's accuracy. From this information, the recruit could be then be trained to control his rate fire more efficiently.

The Rokuoh-Sha took 18x24mm images with 35mm film and could shoot ten frames per second. It began taking photographs as soon as the trigger was pulled and didn't stop until it was released or the film ran out. The advantage of only taking photographs during firing was not just to test accuracy but also to conserve film, which was a valuable resource in wartime.

***Left:** All sides used gun cameras during WWII. This particular image is from a Spitfire during the Battle of Britain and depicts a Heinkel He 111 being hit on its starboard quarter*

Main image: Adam's Auctioneers, Dublin

Introducing the 'Wrath of the Northmen' collection, featuring a selection of Vikings and Saxons and their weaponry from the 790's and onwards. These high quality die-cast figures incorporate intricate detailing and are hand finished, creating stunning History in Miniature.

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The Battle of Kursk: Germany's Lost Victory

WORLD OF TANKS
ROLL OUT

Following their defeat at Stalingrad during the winter of 1942-43, German armed forces launched a momentous offensive in the East known as Operation Citadel on July 4, 1943.

The climax of Operation Citadel, the Battle of Kursk, involved as many as 6,000 tanks, 4,000 aircraft and 2,000,000 fighting men, and is remembered, rightly or wrongly, as the greatest tank battle in history.

A decisive showdown was inevitable, and on July 12th, the fields of Prokhorovka staged an explosive finale.

The Germans were on the verge of the breakthrough they needed to clinch Operation Citadel. Soviet Forces demanded an immediate response. The Soviets' 5th Tank Army, which had its forces martialled in Prokhorovka, was finally deployed to surprise and sever the German advance. On the morning of the July 12th, while artillery rained down, 1000 tanks clashed in the field. At first caught off guard, the Germans met and then repulsed the Soviet charge.

In World of Tanks, you can command the T-34, Tiger, Ferdinand or any other tank that played a pivotal role on the historical fields of Prokhorovka.

World of Tanks is an online PC game dedicated to tank warfare in the mid-20th century, with over 450 of history's most iconic tanks.

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